Susan Dunn: Conflict or Consensus?

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APRIL 1998

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in the Spring
Is wholesome
even for
the King

—Emily Dickinson

From *The Poems of Emily Dickinson.*
Thomas H. Johnson. Ed. Cambridge, Mass.
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Contents

CONTRIBUTORS 181

COMMENT

William Phillips 185

ARTICLES

Edith Kurzweil *One Hundred Years of Seductions* 187

Susan Dunn *Conflict or Consensus?* 195

Susan Haack *The Best Man for the Job....* 214

Millicent Bell *Fiction Chronicle* 259

Igor Webb *Yvor Winters as Teacher* 273

Eugene Goodheart *Thomas Mann's Comic Spirit* 283

Karen Wilkin *Manet's Modernism* 294

FICTION

John Thompson *Benediction* 221

Cyrille Fleischmann *Fame and Fortune* 235
Jazz 240

POETRY

Wislawa Szymborska (tr. by Stanislaw Baranczak and Clare Cavanagh), Dahlia Ravikovitch (tr. by Tsipi Keller), Samuel Menashe, W.S. Di Piero, Peter Davison, Christopher Middleton, Kristin Fogdall, C. Dale Young, Jay Rogoff, Decimus Magnus Ausonius (tr. by David R. Slavitt), Rachel Hadas, Jennifer Barber, James Laughlin 244

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BOOKS

H. J. Kaplan	*Albert Camus: A Life* by Olivier Todd	**301**
Eugene Goodheart	*American Pastoral* by Philip Roth	**306**
Paul Hollander	*At a Century's Ending: Reflections 1982-1995* by George F. Kennan	**310**
Norma Rosen	*Fugitive Pieces* by Anne Michaels	**313**
Cushing Strout	*American Sphinx: The Character of Thomas Jefferson* by Joseph J. Ellis	**317**
Jean Bethke Elshtain	*In Defense of Government. The Rise and Fall of Public Trust* by Jacob Weisberg	**320**
Sanford Pinsker	*Radical Son: A Generational Odyssey* by David Horowitz	**323**
J. D. McClatchy	*Majestic Indolence: English Romantic Poetry and the Work of Art* by Willard Spiegelman *The Title to the Poem* by Anne Ferry	**326**
Letters		**330**

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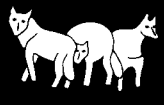

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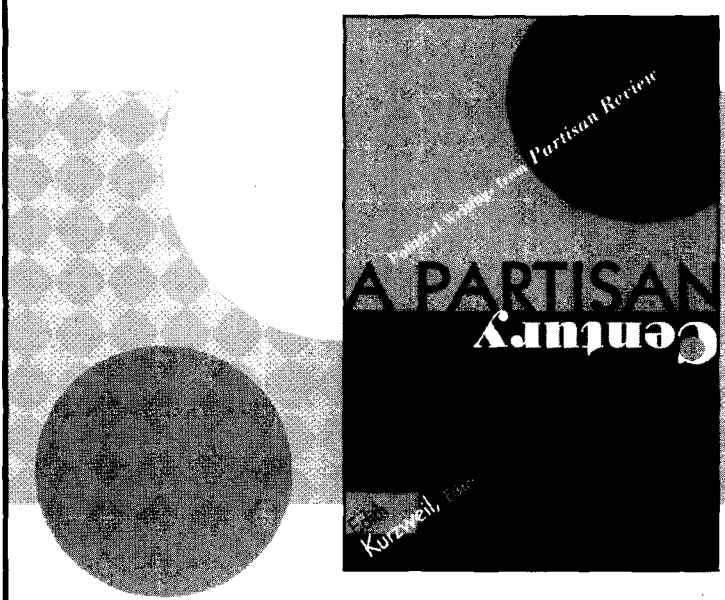

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COMMENTS

Sources of the Left I've been wondering where the ideas and movements on the Left today come from. They do not have their source in either Marx or Lenin, yet they are deemed by the Left itself to be authentic, especially in the Academy. There is some Marxism in the universities, but it is marginal and not very exact. If we take the credos of the Left one by one and compare them with the ideas of Marx or Lenin, I think we should find them appallingly without ancestors.

1. Cultural diversity. Neither Marx nor Lenin were interested in any kind of cultural diversity. Lenin supported the various nationalisms in Russia. But that was mainly a part of his revolutionary strategy.

2. Gay liberation. Neither Marx nor Lenin had the slightest interest in homosexuality of any kind. So far as I know, neither referred to it in their writings. And certainly they had no notion of an "alternative lifestyle."

3. Radical feminism. Neither Marx nor Lenin were especially concerned with feminism, though they did not directly oppose it. What they actually believed was that none of these questions could be adequately solved under capitalism, and that only under socialism would people be free of prejudice or bigotry. And women would be equal to men in all respects.

4. Liberation movements. In general neither Marx nor Lenin believed in any liberation movements other than the ultimate revolutionary one of introducing socialism. They thought of them as soporifics, as pie-in-the-sky.

5. Gender studies. Marx and Lenin, of course, never heard of what are called gender studies. But obviously they would not have had the slightest interest and would have thought of them as intellectual and political distractions.

6. Affirmative action. Marx and Lenin never heard of affirmative action. But they would have been against it, for they had a firm belief in merit and meritocracy.

7. Populism. Marx and Lenin did not care for populism in any form. It will be recalled that Marx went so far as to speak of "the idiocy of the village."

8. Marx and Lenin did not believe in any kind of relativism. Their thinking was founded on absolutes.

9. Marx and Lenin obviously never heard of deconstruction. But it goes without saying that they would have been opposed to it.

10. Elitism. So far as I can recall neither Marx nor Lenin used the term "elite" or "elitism." But clearly they supported the idea of intellectual quality and an intellectual vanguard.

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11. Tradition. Neither Marx nor Lenin believed past achievements in philosophy and the arts were made by dead white males. Karl Marx was himself a dead white male. They had enormous respect for the achievements of the past, particularly in the arts, and they felt that the legacy of the past was to be built on.

12. Third World. Marx had little interest in the backward countries, and Lenin was concerned with them only as part of his revolutionary strategy. Marx, in particular, was interested mainly in the developed countries, where he thought advanced ideas and radical movements developed.

Where then do these ideas and movements come from? It has been suggested that since the big theme of Marxism—that of revolutionary socialism—no longer exists, the left has taken unto itself a number of small themes, many of them minor, trendy, do-goodisms. These do-goodisms have been put together in a kind of general association of credos that are not only religiously supported by the Left but are thought of as constituting the essence of the Left. What the Left did inherit from Marx and Lenin is an intolerance of other tendencies, and a belief in its own moral, intellectual and political superiority. I would think that Marx and Lenin and other radical thinkers would have been baffled, perhaps amused, by the current attitudes and beliefs that constitute the Left.

Roger Stevens was a member of our Advisory Board until shortly before his death. He was a great supporter and administrator of the arts: modest, fair-minded, self-effacing, knowledgeable, with good taste and judgement. Lyndon Johnson appointed him the first chairman of NEA. He appointed Carolyn Kizer, who is a good poet and objective-minded, which is even rarer. And he asked me to chair a committee of seven writers and editors, to be called The Coordinating Council of Literary magazines (CCLM). We functioned fairly well for a couple of years. But greedy magazines and the populist tide began to overwhelm us and soon the giving of grants to magazines became political and corrupt. And I was kicked upstairs to the role of Chairman Emeritus. It should be noted, too, that the populist and regional invasion of CCLM, along with that of the entire NEA, took place under Republican as well as Democratic administrations because neither of them knew much about art. By then Roger Stevens had become head of the Kennedy Center. He was a friend, and we will miss him.

WP

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EDITH KURZWEIL

ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF SEDUCTIONS

The workers of the world didn't unite, but the Freudians did—finally. Arnold Richards, editor of the *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, introduced the conference that started on February 28th at New York's Mount Sinai Stern auditorium, by reminding the six hundred participants, each of whom had shelled out two hundred and fifty dollars to hear the stars of the profession, that they had gotten together to repair the damages caused by innumerable organizational splits—beginning with Adler and Jung over eighty-five years ago. Richards, diplomatically, stressed that the impetus for reconciliation came from the journals and from the "science and the search engines that manage to transcend the divisions." In other words, now that the articles published between 1920 and 1994 in the major journals have been joined on a single CD-ROM, he (and his carefully balanced committee) thought that the members of the innumerable warring factions of analysts might be able to meet in the same room. The issues did not revolve, as outsiders might think, around notions of psychoanalysis versus chemical alternatives of treatment, the advantage (?) of having an MD or a PhD, or the means of defending themselves against popular attacks and misconceptions. Instead, they focused on the clinical methods that until now have divided them.

George Makari, of the Columbia University Center for Psychoanalytic Training and Research, began by asking whether, as Jeffrey Masson claims, "truth was suppressed [by Freud] in favor of a socially palatable lie." In his (to me) convincing paper, he documented why Freud had to address the theories of 1890s sexologists to have them pay attention to his trauma theory. That is why after diagnosing sexual seduction as the cause of hysteria, he then hypothesized that it engenders repression and hysteria in women and perversion in men. But Freud had doubts: two months after the death of his father in December 1896 he suggested that in all cases the father was the perpetrator of abuse. In the now famous letter of September 21, 1897, he renounced this theory—due to failure in treatments; to the unexpected frequency of hysteria; to the indistinguishability of truth and fiction in the unconscious; and to the fact that memories of seduction did not surface in psychosis. Thus Freud relinquished seduction as the cause in favor

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of a general category of causes. Eight years later, he denied that he had exaggerated the frequency or importance of sexual seduction and had not recognized that some victims of sexual abuse remained normal. It took him six more years to give up the trauma theory. By then the movement was successful, Freud had converted his repudiation of the seduction theory, had more or less replaced it by sexual libido, and was busy defending his movement against Adler and Jung. This "revolutionary paradigm shift," inevitably, was bound up with the history of psychoanalysis, and involved truth claims related to personal and communal identities—details revisionists such as Masson and Sulloway have left out.

The second speaker, Jay Greenberg, a member of the William Alanson White group, recalled that Freud's success with hysterical patients had clued him in on the link between repressed experiences and physical symptoms; and that the premature sexual exposure these patients shared had led him to postulate seduction as the *sine qua non* of psychoneuroses. Under the circumstances, asked Greenberg, how could Freud have abandoned this hypothesis without giving up on psychoanalysis? He reminded us also that Freud used other concepts, such as "libido," "castration," or "trauma" just as metaphorically, literally, playfully, and ambiguously: *Verführung* implies that it is with someone the child knows; may be perpetrated by a stranger, a governess, a relative or another child; and was central in creating the disposition to hysteria. Freud changed his mind because he realized that seduction is differentiated: it may or may not be abusive; can be due to genital irritation; or to a caring, seductive mother. Greenberg ended up defining seduction, *à la* Laplanche, as the intervention of the adult other, with his sexual unconscious that contains the potential for living a fully realized sexual—and relational—life, as well as the greatest danger of falling ill.

Henry Smith, of the Psychoanalytic Institute of New England East, thought Makari was extrapolating backwards and reading Freud's shift too literally, and that Greenberg, in a metaphorical way, was adopting the "poise of an elephant sitting on a fence," in order to select what best fits into his relational framework. Implicitly relying on Sulloway's interpretations, Smith maintained that Freud's reconstructive lens may lead to truth not contained in the literal period of the times; that unconscious tricks may distort memory in retrospect; and that Freud always held on to ambiguity, which is contrary to our current habit to dichotomize. Makari responded that he prefers to complicate history by going to the sources, and Greenberg—politely—said that he was addressing the topic of the session rather than throwing words at concepts.

Helen Meyers (Columbia University Center) pointed out that seduction calls attention to the fact that something is wrong. Greenberg, she

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went on, takes in external events and internal reality in broad strokes; Makari leads us on a guided tour of Freud's discoveries to show that this shift was not abrupt, but a wish that he had known early on what he found out later. She noted that *Verführung* involves a seducer and someone who responds; and that Freud conceptualized the seduction by the mother very differently in 1931 than in 1897. But whether or not analysts discard this hypothesis, it raises important questions. And she suggested that we inquire why seduction currently is of interest, how traumatic it is, and how frequent. These historical issues, however, were dropped throughout the rest of the conference as both panelists and audience became absorbed by ever more intricate clinical questions.

Arnold Cooper (Columbia University Center) introduced the second panel by pointing out that trauma was the central theme of the conference and, gently, asked the participants to explain and clarify their thinking rather than their ideologies. Scott Dowling, the editor of *The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*, considered psychological trauma to be the "regulatory response of a functional biological system, the mind, to impingements upon its integrity." He elaborated on the pitfalls of equating repressed memories with unconscious fantasy—which resulted from the helplessness and hopelessness whose meaning a child has felt as overwhelming. One of his examples was of a nine year old boy whose father was an abusive alcoholic. After a rousing argument with his wife he had left the house and upon his return at three a.m. had passed out. When the boy saw his father on the floor he thought that his wish to have him die had come true. His trauma resulted from the fact that his wish appeared to have been granted. Dowling then generalized that the power of the traumatic event is provided by a previously determined unconscious meaning that is being reactivated and felt as dangerous by the patient. He then detailed how he goes about building the trust that allows this unconcious meaning to surface. At that point, I thought of the film, *Good Will Hunting*, which critics have praised for its acting, some audiences have faulted for its foul language and violence, but whose "maverick shrink" I have not seen referred to as a "psychoanalyst."

Marylou Lionells of the William Alanson White Institute spoke to the issues that have "separated classical analysts from the Interpersonal-relational schools." Like Horney, who over forty-five years ago stalked out of the New York Psychoanalytic Association (NYPA), she explained that *real life events are always important*, and that their meanings *are always* defined relationally. She made her point by means of a patient's history, and cited colleagues of *her* theoretical orientation. She presented her patient, Al's, trauma by moving from his present situation to his early experiences; by interpreting her own responses to him; and by recounting how the quality of their interaction changed over time. Lionells demonstrated that she

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"helped. . .[him] become a distinct person" by "correcting" his earlier, pathological relationships and familial adaptations. And she suggested that a psychoanalytic paradigm for the next century must "recognize the interpenetration of relational factors with internally generated needs and satisfactions, *whether or not we label them traumatic.*"

Anna Ornstein, representing the self-psychology school, stated that analysts continue to differ on whether to view the roots of psychic trauma from a hermeneutic, a developmental, or an adaptational perspective. Since early trauma was thought to create structural *defects* or *deficits* and later trauma to have been engendered by *conflicts* related to sexual and aggressive fantasies, Freudian ego psychologists had to reconstruct the events of earliest childhood. Self-psychologists, however, focus on the parents' personalities, and especially on the same-sex parent's reactions to specific *childhood emotional states*—to a sense of loneliness, compulsive daydreaming, grandiose fantasies. Patients get better, she held, when they recover specific intrapsychic experiences and repair them in the analytic transference. Ornstein then demonstrated how she had worked with a handsome male patient who suffered from sexual dysfunction, could not commit himself, and feared first being exploited and then abandoned. She cured him by helping him reconstruct the micro-traumas of his childhood—the fantasies and disillusionments in a father who could "shield [him] from the world but not from his anxieties."

Jacob Arlow (NYPA), one of the deans of the ego psychology dominating the profession well into the 1970s, recalled that in the 1940s and 1950s he had been intrigued by the seduction hypothesis because it assumed that an as yet unreported crime had been committed, which the analyst, like a detective, had to solve. At the time, analysts—most of whom were physicians—took to the idea that the repressed memory of seduction was like a foreign body in the psyche and fashioned their theory of cure, and of technique, in line with it. Popular movies, such as *Spellbound* with Ingrid Bergman, reinforced misperceptions of the transference and helped change the culture. Again, I thought of *Good Will Hunting* and how the current disdain for psychoanalysis is expressed by Will who had gotten rid of all sorts of therapists without ever finding out that he had been traumatized. Neither he nor his audiences seem to be aware that psychoanalysts, in adapting to the culture as well as to more knowldge rarely sit behind the patient, rarely interpret, and don't tell their patients what to do. *Plus ça change. . .*

Arlow went on to say that the metaphor of seduction, whose victim usually was a female child, generated even greater attention when Masson revived it, probably because it bolstered attempts to discredit psychoanalysis and fit into the agenda of political activists—who could use it as a

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weapon. Still, Freud's reconstruction of the famous Wolf Man's trauma as due to having witnessed parental intercourse, Arlow stated, left out other possible causes—his own illnesses, the mental states of his parents and sister, and having seen animals have intercourse and be castrated. In other words, the Wolf Man's trauma could have originated in any or many of these scenes. Because parental sex life *per se* is not necessarily traumatic unless accompanied by other upsets, some individuals may master seemingly unbearable assaults that don't touch others: "one person's mouse may be another person's dragon." In some, such events may lead to experience, in others to symptoms. Arlow offered two examples: a female patient who had three sets of traumatic experiences—preoedipal (related to toilet training), oedipal (related to parental intercourse), and a loveless marriage; and a male one (he had made it from rags to riches) who throughout his life was searching for his true (dead) father. He noted that in each case the trauma exacerbated previous conflicts, and was played out via unconscious fantasies that erupted when triggered by a subsequent event. Consequently, treatment must depend on understanding what originally caused the illness.

Robert Michels, known among his colleagues at Columbia University and by the international psychoanalytic community as the most amusing and incisive commentator, reminded us that seduction and trauma are not equivalent; that whereas seduction relates to a potential response trauma is negative—although traumatic seduction is more complex—and implies something for which the organism is not pre-adapted. Nevertheless, trauma and environment are not the same, even though as one moves away from extraordinary to everyday trauma, the potential for growth increases. He noted that Dowling asks how we separate splitting and symptom formation from screen memory, but does not come to grips with the differences between what impacts on the developing nervous system rather than on minds that are capable of fantasy. Michels then wondered whether Lionells would have understood her patient differently if they had worked through the initial transference-countertransference instead of exploring his memories. He is even more skeptical of Ornstein's "parent blaming," because even after knowing the patient's memory or fantasy, we still don't know what really happened. Michels doubts that "in recovering these memories, the traumatic aspects of the caretaker's personalities become progressively clarified," and asks whether it follows from her self-psychological viewpoint that other approaches might be re-traumatizing an already traumatized patient. Michels faulted Arlow's presentation only for having failed to account for specific etiology. He concluded that everyday seduction may even develop the capacity for adaptation and thus not be traumatic, and if traumatic it then is not of the everyday variety. Ultimately, these panelists reluctantly agreed that neither analyst nor

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patient know exactly what happened early on, but what counts are the meanings the patient's unconscious ascribes to them.

The first of the three presentations with the severely traumatized was by Jody Messler Davies of the NYU Postdoctoral Program. She described her work with Sam, a patient who was "in deep despair," having been badly hurt by a sexually abusing father. She told of her empathic responses to the slowly emerging tale of the little boy who loved this father intensely and then had to split off from his rageful reaction to abuse by lying. She made his buried, early conflicts come alive and led Sam (and us) to understand why the little boy had to dissociate from his feelings, and later on was unable to distinguish between meaningful and simply parotted words. Sam, for a long time, had to passively submit to Davies in order to avoid feeling, and only much later, in the tug of the transference-countertransference relationship, was able to move between the two little boys, the abused one and the one who "manages" him. Davies ended up by referring to Fairbairn's work with abused patients who keep living in a world of conditioned reflexivity, fluctuating between hope and potential annihilation. Like Will Hunting's therapist, though maybe a little less dramatically, Davies repeatedly told Sam: "It's not your fault."

Peter Fonagy of the British Psychoanalytic Society presented Henrietta, who was a murderer, and eventually confessed to him that she had killed her boyfriend intentionally rather than accidentally as she had claimed in court. After having been abused by her alcoholic father between the ages of seven and eleven, she had had sexual relations with a priest at her school. But unlike the dissociated Sam, Henrietta was as nasty and provocative with her analyst as Will Hunting of the movie. She constantly attacked him, was "apparently angry yet basically terrified," and afraid that either he would kill her or that she would kill him. In their sessions, she zig-zagged between anger and the need to control, between being there and totally absent. In the transference she wanted Fonagy to understand her, yet did everything to throw him off guard. Her inner world emerged in dreams that provided only blurry windows on other dreams. Henrietta apparently had internalized her abusers' cruelty through a tortuous process that led her to identify with the aggressor. To experience coherence of her self she had to find someone to torture her—a process she tried to replicate in the analysis. Only during the fourth year did hatred for her father begin to emerge, together with a dislike of her analyst. Eventually, this initiated a more viable interaction. Fonagy generalized that patients with personality disorders and histories of seduction always are provocative and that their analysts' reactions might make them even more difficult; that by eliciting their negative responses they get them to lose their therapeutic identity. And he concluded that—contrary to some theorists—one can

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work with such patients who, as they begin to suffer less distress, gradually experience their internal world.

The last speaker's name, Leonard Shengold, has been a household word ever since he wrote *Soul Murder* (1989). He possesses the rare talent of presenting complex material in accessible language. He corroborated Davies's and Fonagy's points and, talking of his own cases, found that the abused victim must comprehend that "hate and love must be able to flow. . . at the same time"; that to temper the overload of murderous hatred and its associated terrors soul murder victims must develop authentic feelings for others and for themselves; and that "a mixture of compulsive deadness and breakthrough of uncontrollable feelings and behavior coexist" in a "kind of Orwellian 'doublethink'." Shengold likened the lives of criminally traumatized children to a sort of family concentration camp. As in all psychotherapeutic situations, he stated, "we know what to do; the mystery lies in how to do it," how to use the countertransference to the patient's benefit, and open up an emotionally closed person—to positive feelings. These three papers were permeated by the strain and suffering such analysts experience at the hands of their patients. The emotional drain seemed to be reenacted even in their presentations.

The discussant Glen Gabbard of the Menninger School of Psychiatry, another facile yet hard-hitting analyst, began by reiterating what by now had repeatedly come up: that it is not the past that must be excavated but what transpires in the present, in the transference and countertransference: "you can't look into the rear view mirror while driving, or you'll crash." Davies's patients, he found, experience themselves as damaged goods, live in limbo, blame themselves for what happened to them so long ago which, in turn, creates the ambiguity that suspects the analyst of being up to something. Henrietta had to get Fonagy to hate her, had to keep him away because she never had experienced emotional love and thus could not feel it apart from sexuality—which had so damaged her. Yet she wanted to be helped. Analytic love, Gabbard summarized, is the belief in the patient and cannot be equated with sexual love. He faulted Davies for being too poetic, and both Fonagy and Shengold for generalizing too much, reminding them that each trauma differs from every other, and that treatment must be specifically tailored to each patient.

The last session was introduced by two commentators, Steven Ellman of the Freudian Society and Stephen Mitchell of the William Alanson White Institute. The chairs, panelists and discussants of all previous sessions were seated on the dias, and these eighteen people were getting into ever finer distinctions of therapeutic practices, similarities and differences in diagnoses, patients' histories and their meanings, the impact of biology and etiology, the means of getting into and out of the transference and

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countertransference in the establishment of trust, the difference between conscious and unconscious fantasy, and much more. Ultimately, they more or less agreed that there is nothing therapeutic about recovering memory without the occurence of psychic change, and that the activator for such change is in the relationship. Not until patients find out what they know, and why, and that they have choices, can there be lasting change. In major traumas, patients want to know that it really happened, and that the analyst believes in them. As Owen Renik put it, "our patients have to know that fantasy is not reality, we have to help them feel better, release them from distress, and allow for increased pleasure."

While straining to follow the complex distinctions between inner (unconscious) reality and its outer (conscious) counterpart, I kept reflecting that it's not surprising that analysts are misunderstood. To grasp what they do is difficult—especially at a time when the culture is attuned to sound bites, to dichotomous explanations, to a sort of fast food for the mind. Even getting together, it seems to me, cannot overcome the reign of the populists and the philistines, unless they somehow can get across that, for instance, the recovery of memories of seduction (whether real or false) alone cannot cure; that owning one's self is a not a statement but a process; and that a little knowledge may even be dangerous. At the same time, I was appalled to realize that few analysts—aside from those on the panels—knew anything about the cultural history of their discipline. Even when talking of politics, many psychoanalysts don't really distinguish between the politics of the White House or of Iraq, and those of their organizations. This is more than understandable when we think that they spend their days tuning in to the unconscious lives of their patients. Nevertheless, the only way they might put the Freud bashers in their place would be to recognize themselves within the larger, cultural context, not to adapt to it, but to debate the issues—rather than to reduce politics to psychology.

P.S.: At the psychoanalytic conference in Madrid, which I attended the following weekend, the mostly European participants kept moving seamlessly from detailed historical data to theoretical and clinical issues, and to the connections between them.

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SUSAN DUNN

Conflict or Consensus? Lessons from the Sister Revolutions

When President William Jefferson Clinton celebrates centrism, bipartisanship, and consensus, he is not alone. Editorial writers and political commentators endlessly bombard Washington and us with urgent calls for consensus and an end to "party politics as usual." Their assumption seems to be that, since the Founders built conflict into the very structure of the government, the best strategy for governing is to rise above conflict. And perhaps an even more basic assumption is that consensus and unity are somehow healthier, more noble, less disruptive and destructive than partisan conflict. Sixty years ago, a President embraced conflict. In 1936, Franklin Roosevelt, railing against the businessmen, bankers, and financiers who rabidly attacked the New Deal, declared to a tumultuous Madison Square Garden crowd, in his deliberate, distinctive voice, "They are unanimous in their hate for me, and I *welcome* their hatred!"

Do progress and change—the campaign promise made by virtually all politicians—issue from unity or from conflict? Does a democracy achieve political stability and health by valorizing concord, unity, and centrism or by abetting competing interests and opposing ideologies? Do Americans see conflict as a stabilizing or destabilizing force? As the century draws to a close, have we come to fear political conflict? Do we long to transcend division and contention and enter a harmonious realm free from strife?

If we look back to the American and French Revolutions, we may find insight into the nature and history of the political concepts of conflict and consensus, for one Revolution purposefully incorporated political conflict in myriad forms while the other worshipped concord and consensus. The sister revolutions that presented to the world two enduring and antithetical models of democracy may hold lessons for us concerning the health and the future of our own democracy.

The harmony and consensus that reigned at the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia in 1787 delighted James Madison. The delegates, he marveled, managed to deliberate without conflict or faction and "with a unanimity almost as unprecedented as it must have been unexpected." Such concord was a rare achievement, almost a miracle. One could

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almost believe, he remarked, that God himself had intervened. He could see no evidence whatsoever of "the pestilential influence of party animosities," the disease considered inherent in virtually all deliberative bodies, always threatening to contaminate and undermine them.

How had such amity and concord been possible? Perhaps the members of the Convention approved the Constitution, Madison hypothesized, because they possessed "a deep conviction of the necessity of sacrificing private opinions and partial interests to the public good." Ironically, such willingness to sacrifice one's own interests for the good of all was not to be expected of citizens of the new federal union. Unless there were some extreme crisis and overwhelming sense of shared purpose, Madison anticipated neither consensus nor unity in the new republic. The Convention represented a privileged moment in American politics, a moment of harmony that produced a Constitution incorporating and even enshrining the principles of disharmony and conflict. After that founding moment, unity would never again be the goal of government. On the contrary, the new federal government was carefully structured so that people and interest groups would collide rather than concur.

Indeed, as soon as the Constitution was agreed to and signed in Philadelphia, conflict over it commenced. Would the state legislatures vote in favor of the new federal government? Anti-federalists were galvanizing their followers and drumming up opposition. James Madison was troubled that even in Virginia, distinguished men such as Patrick Henry, Arthur Lee, Benjamin Harrison, and others were opposed to the Constitution. On the one hand, he could only regret this dissent, but on the other, he knew well that just such pluralism and conflict were the fundamental underpinnings of his political vision. When Alexander Hamilton proposed that he, Madison, and John Jay help strengthen the Federalist position by publishing a series of essays in New York newspapers, Madison readily agreed. Returning to New York that November, he drew up, in less than a week, one of the masterpieces of modern political thought. Two words describe the import of Federalist 10: *diversity* and *conflict*.

All "closed systems" move toward entropy, toward disorder. So states the second law of thermodynamics. Madison's plan for American government seemed to take into account this law of physics. Free rein was given to citizens to act in their self-interest, to form factions, to enter into conflict with one another, and the predictable result would be disorder and tumult. The government would make no attempt to eliminate conflict—that is, non-violent and rational contention—only to moderate it and provide channels for it.

In France, however, the momentum of the Revolution was toward order, not tumult, toward oneness, not multiplicity. Far from accepting

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diversity and conflict, the French worshipped homogeneity and unanimity. Their leaders believed that the salvation of the Revolution depended above all on the absolute unity and solidarity of the people. According to their revolutionary agenda, three orders—nobility, clergy, and third estate—would become one, twenty-five million citizens would form one unitary people. All would sacrifice their self-interest for the common good of all; diverse opinions would yield to consensus. Could revolutionary government in France succeed in blocking the impulse toward entropy and move instead toward order and oneness? Can laws of physics be reversed?

Madison's brilliant and novel plan for the federal republic stemmed from his fundamental belief that citizens are individuals and that as individuals, they are all different. He explicitly rejected the idea of regarding Americans "as one homogeneous mass." He knew well that people would never agree unanimously on anything. A vast variety of "unavoidable" factors—wealth and property, social class, religion, geography, political ideas, etc.—would always divide people into different interest groups and factions. Indeed, the principle of diversity seemed embedded in human nature, that is, in human rationality. Madison argued that rational people view issues in different ways because reason is essentially imperfect. "As long as the reason of man continues *fallible*," he maintained, "and he is at liberty to exercise it, different opinions will be formed."

Could differences and factions be removed from society? Madison asked. Could conflict be eliminated and unity achieved? Well, unity and unanimity could certainly be achieved by summarily outlawing factions, but such an option was completely unsatisfactory and unacceptable, since its cost would be freedom itself. "Liberty is to faction," Madison said in a superb simile, "what air is to fire. . . .But it could not be less folly to abolish liberty, which is essential to political life, because it nourishes faction, than it would be to wish the annihilation of air."

Was there any other way to achieve unity? No. The dream of unity, he noted with disdain, was a fantasy that only "theoretic politicians" could find fruitful. Only cloistered philosophers could imagine imposing the same opinions, passions, and interests on every citizen. In the "civilized communities" of real life, no such "perfect homogeneousness of interests, opinions & feelings" would ever be found. Division and conflict were inevitable because "the latent causes of faction are. . .sown in the nature of man." Not "reason" but passion and self-interest would always dominate human affairs.

Madison's acceptance of the reality of human nature was itself a crucial feature of the American Revolution. He was never tempted to remold or "regenerate"—as the French would say—human beings to suit utopian

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political blueprints. "What is government itself," he wrote, "but the greatest of all reflections on human nature. If men were angels, no government would be necessary."

Disorder—the key to republican government? Madison's political genius lay not merely in his realization that diversity and division were inevitable but rather in his insight that they could be useful in government, that they could be an effective bulwark against tyranny. This was the lesson he had learned when he worked with Jefferson to secure the right of religious freedom in Virginia. He discovered that the ultimate protection of religious freedom lay not in statements of principles or in deeply held convictions or even in laws, but surprisingly in a power situation. Divisions among a variety of religious groups, and even conflict among them, made it unlikely that one "overbearing" religious group would seek to oppress or infringe upon the rights of others. A multiplicity of religions and sects —Protestant, Catholic, Jewish—ensured the freedom of all.

Applying this principle to political power and factions, Madison believed that self-interested and passionate factions, given free rein, would check and balance one another, making it virtually impossible for one faction to dominate the others, thus creating social and political equilibrium. Although political theorists had for centuries viewed factions and parties as so many sicknesses eating away at the body politic, for Madison, factions were stabilizing rather than disruptive. He counted on factions to perform a task of paramount importance: resistance to any concentration of power, especially the power of an "overbearing" majority. He was convinced that the more diverse the society, the more it was broken down into "so many parts, interests and classes," the more likely it would be that any majority would become broad and hence moderate in its goals, and the less likely it would be that the rights and interests of individuals would be threatened by "the combinations of the majority." This same notion of division, conflict, and equilibrium also became the foundation for Madison's plan for the structure of American government.

Not everyone agreed. A system of two legislative chambers? Why, it was "like putting one horse before a cart and the other behind it and whipping them both," exclaimed Benjamin Franklin. "If the horses are of equal strength, the wheels of the cart, like the wheels of government, will stand still; and if the horses are strong enough, the cart will be torn to pieces." A legislative body divided against itself? A patently foolish idea.

The specter of governmental deadlock—Franklin's two horses—did not haunt James Madison. In designing a plan for the new federal union, Madison knew that he had to make the fundamental choice between energetic government and stable government. Ideally government would be both stable and energetic, but Madison realized that energy posed an insur-

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mountable problem: it requires the concentration of power either in the hands of the few or the hands of the many. In the most energetic form of government, power is executed "by a single hand." But such an "energetic" leader, Madison noted, can all too easily become a dictator. Thus, faced with the choice between energy and stability, Madison easily opted for stability in government. He concluded that only stability and not energy could be counted on to coexist with liberty. Stability came at a high price: energetic, dynamic government would have to be sacrificed. But given Madison's realistic if not pessimistic appraisal of human nature, that was a small cost to pay for freedom.

The Madisonian system of checks and balances was a perfect way to fragment authority and prevent a concentration of power. "Ambition must be made to counteract ambition"—with this terse sentence Madison insured that conflict would endure within the government and that any popular majority would be thwarted by checks and balances. Not only were homogeneity and unanimity not expected, the new government was designed specifically to prevent unity or oneness.

Thus Madison turned traditional political thought upside down. Political theorists had always warned that factions would inevitably degenerate into conspiracies intent on overthrowing the republic itself. According to these theorists, the republic itself stood for and defended the common good against the claims of interested factions. But Madison rejected the idea that there could be a "neutral" agency in government that voiced the public good. He was convinced that every participant in government represented some interest or faction. Factions did not exist in opposition to government: they *constituted* government. Conflict among different factions was not merely tolerated *by* government: conflict *was* government.

The French Republic, One And Indivisible. The French translation of *The Federalist* was not a best-seller in France. Only a few people—the humanitarian lawyer Brissot, the finance minister Necker, and the revolutionary bishop Talleyrand among them—admired the book's authors, Hamilton, Madisson, and Gay (sic). Another work attracted far more attention. In January 1789, in the middle of a turbulent winter, pregnant with anticipation, a small political pamphlet began circulating in Paris. People read it aloud in cafés, passed it excitedly around to their friends, discussed it in intellectual salons, and speculated about who the anonymous author could be. Soon people talked of little else. Within weeks thirty thousand copies were sold; three more editions were printed that same year. The fourth edition revealed at last the author's name: Emmanuel Sieyès.

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The pamphlet, "What is the Third Estate?," contained the radical concepts that would mold the Revolution and chart its course. Sieyès was a forty year-old priest and church administrator, surprisingly indifferent to religion and spirituality but passionate about philosophy, politics, and his heroes, Descartes and Voltaire. Reserved, perpetually clothed in sullen black, his face pale, his health fragile, he seemed to come alive only when he spoke out about freeing France from her history. Then his weak voice would gain strength as his abstract ideas gained audàcity, his eyes ablaze as he attacked with trenchant, emotionless words the predatory aristocracy that he despised. Sieyès was Madison's French counterpart, the artisan of revolutionary ideology.

That winter, an alarming economic crisis rocked France. Every day people demonstrated in the streets over taxes and food shortages. Expectantly, everyone awaited the momentous meeting of the Estates General, hoping that the Estates could restore financial order as well as address burning questions of liberty and equality. Following the centuries-old formula, representatives of the three orders—the nobility, the clergy, and the Third Estate—would meet, each order deliberating separately. Spokesmen for the Third Estate were already objecting to this antiquated structure. Looking for a strategy that would guarantee them a majority, they were demanding that the three estates meet together rather than separately and that the Third Estate be accorded representation equal to the two other orders combined.

But in his pamphlet Sieyès had gone even further, making a far more radical demand. Bitterly denouncing the entire anachronistic institution of the Estates General, he declared that there should be a single National Assembly comprised solely of representatives of the Third Estate. The aristocracy and the clergy together included about two hundred thousand members; the Third Estate, twenty-five million. The nation and the Third Estate, he argued, were one and the same.

"What is the Third Estate?" Sieyès demanded in his lapidary style. "Everything. What has it been in the political order up to now? Nothing. What is it asking for? To become something." Instantaneously Sieyès excluded the two privileged orders from membership in the nation. Their representatives, he claimed, spoke not for different orders but for different nations. Even the clothes they wore, he added, proved that they were foreign. Thomas Jefferson, always buoyed by upheaval and revolution, commented that Sieyès's words "electrified France."

"How easy it would be to do without the privileged orders!" Sieyès predicted. "How difficult it will be to turn them into citizens!" The first two orders detracted from the nation. Without them, France would be more, not less; without them, the nation would flourish. Though he

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briefly entertained the possibility of permitting the first two orders to join the National Assembly, since they would constitute only a powerless minority, he determined that it was pointless to incorporate a permanent obstructionist minority party that would constantly vote against the majority. He approved, however, of the idea of the two first estates' renouncing their privileges and joining the rest of the nation as equals. But as separate, privileged orders, they were like malignant tumors that had to be removed from the body.

When the Estates General convened that spring, Sieyès, by then an elected representative of the Third Estate, not of the clergy, as well as a celebrity in Paris, audaciously proposed that the Third Estate declare itself the National Assembly. Not only did his profoundly revolutionary motion pass by a vote of four hundred ninety-one to ninety, but two days later, the clergy agreed with the representatives of the "Third," and voted to join them. The next morning, Louis XVI locked them all out of their meeting room, insisting that the traditional three separate orders of France be respected. Refusing to disperse, the representatives went *en masse* to an athletic court, the Jeu de Paume, where they took an oath not to leave until a new constitution for France was written and enacted.

"I order you, Gentlemen, to disband," commanded the king. But after some nobles defected to the Third Estate, the king, realizing that he had little choice but to accept the legitimacy of the new National Assembly, invited his "faithful clergy and faithful nobility" to join the Third Estate. In August, all privileges and feudal rights were abolished. "The Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen," composed that month, decreed that the nation was sovereign. Just eight months after the publication of his ideas, Sieyès's theoretical blueprint for France had become the new reality. His printed words and radical ideas had metamorphosed into the revolutionary acts of a nation, proving that ideas and theories can shape events and institutions.

The key to Sieyès's vision of a new France—and the concept that shaped the Revolution's politics and became its mantra—was *unity.* The refrain—repeated in every possible context over the course of the Revolution—always remained the same: "the Republic, one and indivisible." People swore oaths to it, agreed to die for it, and denounced traitors to it. The salvation of France and the success of the Revolution appeared to hinge on the indivisibility of the nation. "It is through union and concord," one representative asserted, "that prosperity occurs. . .if you are united, the nation is invincible. If you are divided, the nation becomes a slave."

Underlying this doctrine of "oneness" lay Sieyès's radical new definition of the nation as consisting solely of the Third Estate, the new

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sovereign. Composed of this one order, the nation would possess one single will and could therefore deliberate and legislate purposefully and effectively. "There cannot be one will as long as we permit three orders," he patiently explained. "At best, the three orders might agree. But they will never constitute *one* nation, *one* representation and *one* common will."

Can twenty-five million people possess one single will? The answer for Sieyès was "yes." He conceived the Third Estate *not* as a diverse population of heterogeneous individuals each acting in his own self-interest, but rather as a homogeneous mass. This philosopher-politician, more comfortable with abstract ideas than with unruly human beings, envisioned all members of the Third Estate not only as equal but also as like-minded, sharing the same opinions, ideals, and revolutionary goals. Indeed, the hallmark of a citizen was the commonality he shared with other citizens. Individuals might differ from one another in their private lives, Sieyès allowed, but those differences occur "beyond the sphere of citizenship."

Significantly, Madison had already criticized in 1787 the leap that Sieyès made in 1789, that is, the leap from the idea of citizens' equality before the law to the idea of citizens' similarity in everything else. "Theoretic politicians," Madison wrote in *Federalist 10*, "have erroneously supposed that by reducing mankind to a perfect equality in their political rights, they would at the same time be perfectly equalized and assimilated in their possessions, their opinions, and their passions." For Madison, there was no single common good or "General Will" of society, only the interests and wills of diverse citizens and factions, all competing for influence and power.

But the French had been profoundly influenced by Rousseau's concept of the General Will. Throughout the Revolution they would refer to it, taking for granted the validity of the fantastical theory that was the centerpiece of his political philosophy. Rousseau had held that a democratic society possesses a "General Will." This "will" reflects what enlightened citizens would want if they were able to make decisions solely as social beings and citizens and not as private individuals. *Individuals* may possess private wills that express their particular interests, but *citizens* must recognize and concur with the General Will that mirrors the good of all. Citizens' recognition and acceptance of the General Will assure the harmony and unanimity of the polity.

There could be no legitimate opposition to the General Will, according to Rousseau. Those who disagree with the General Will are simply in error, and to persist in this error would be to sacrifice membership in the polity and political rights. How can citizens know with certainty what constitutes the General Will? Fortunately it was obvious, according to Rousseau, and required nothing more than common sense. Those who

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cannot recognize the General Will must be made to see the light. "Whoever refuses to obey the general will," he decreed, "will be constrained to do so by the entire body: this means simply that he will be *forced* to be free."

Building on his understanding of Rousseau, Sieyès viewed citizens' rights and freedoms as deriving from their status as equal and concurring members of society, from their submission to the General Will. "There can be no true public freedom," he explained, "that is not based on equality." Any individual who "exits from the common quality of citizen" cannot "participate in political rights."

For Sieyès, as for Rousseau before him, there could be no legitimate role for dissenting individuals or minority factions to play in self-government. Sieyès contended that all citizens, by virtue of having accepted and entered into their society's social contract, agree to be bound by the will of the majority. A citizen has the obligation to "view the common will as his own." Should he refuse to yield to the majority, his only alternative is to leave the polity. Thus the sole solution envisaged by Sieyès to the problem of possible political conflict between an individual and the group was expatriation. Similarly, a minority faction had no right to oppose the majority, since the majority could be assumed to speak for the General Will. Ever the accommodating teacher, Sieyès insisted that if someone could not clearly see that the General Will was the will of the majority and not the will of the minority, well, then "there is no point in trying to reason with him." The minority must simply join the majority. So much for opposition!

Patriotic citizens would always place the public interest above their private interest. "Everyone must forget his own interest and pride," instructed Saint-Just, the most radical ideologue among the Jacobins. "Private happiness and interest are a violence against the social order. You must forget yourselves. . . . Your interest demands that you forget your interest; the only salvation is through the public good." Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness were thus conceived in collective terms. "The social union has as its object not just the freedom of one or several individuals," Sieyès declared to the National Assembly in July 1789, "but the freedom of all." Similarly, the goal of society was the "common happiness" of all, not individuals' pursuit of their own personal happiness.

In the United States, the concept of "we the people," as expressed in the Preamble to the Constitution, signified no more than the diverse inhabitants of the land and the future citizens of the federal republic, but in France, the "people"—conceived as one and indivisible, an organic collective being—became the object of a revolutionary cult. Over and over

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revolutionary orators extolled the new divinity, "the people," in whose name they claimed to speak. The people were taken to be the source of all virtue and goodness. Ultimately Jacobins were willing to sacrifice real people—rowdy, imperfect, Catholic, royalist, apolitical—to their abstract, rational concept of an "ideal people."

The Jeffersonian Model Of Party Politics. In 1800, on the day it became clear that he won a majority in the presidential election in New York State, Thomas Jefferson called on President John Adams. "Well," Adams said, "I understand that you are to beat me in this contest, and I will only say that I will be as faithful a subject as any you will have." "Mr. Adams," replied Jefferson, "this is no personal contest between you and me. *Two systems of principles on the subject of government divide our fellow* citizens into two parties. With one of these you concur, and I with the other. . . .Were we both to die to-day, to-morrow two other names would be in the place of ours, without any change in the motion of the machinery. Its motion is from its principles, not from you or myself." As Jefferson carefully explained, the basis of party politics is ideological conflict between two competing political parties—not conflict among branches of government and not personal conflict between individuals. This new kind of conflict, driven by political visions and principles, would provide the momentum for change. Energy, through conflict, Jefferson remarked to John Dickinson, had returned to government.

Now there was a second strategy for governing the nation. Whereas the Madisonian model of fragmentation and checks and balances used conflict to impede the will of the majority, the Jeffersonian model of party politics used conflict to empower the majority. Madison and Jefferson—fellow Virginians, life-long friends, and confidantes—shared many ideas about government, but one man feared a popular majority while the other sought to shape and invigorate its voice. One proved to be a master theoretician of the system of checks and balances, the other a consummate party politician.

Can a democratic election be considered a revolution? The watershed election of 1800 changed so dramatically the principles of American government that the political historian James MacGregor Burns has called it a second American Revolution. How was this election different from earlier ones? It introduced not only politics based on two rival parties competing for power and alternately governing but also created the virtually unheard-of precedent of one defeated incumbent party peacefully turning over political power to the opposition. The recognition of the legitimacy of the opposition and the acceptance of a system of organized, adversarial political parties marked the final stage in the American Revolution.

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The transition, however, from the Washingtonian desire for consensus to the acceptance of ideological party conflict would take decades. It was a process of change all the more daunting because almost no one, as Burns points out, had a theory of party. The evolution of parties in the United States was shaped far more by events than by design, the result of "drift and experimentation."

The English, on the other hand, were already engaged in developing a theory of political parties. Edmund Burke, a leader of the opposition Whig party, found it inconceivable that representative government could exist without political parties. Why would like-minded politicians, who want to see their ideas and principles translated into practice, not associate and cooperate with one another? But despite Burke's insight into the importance of associations and parties, Americans were skeptical if not plainly averse to the idea of organized parties. George Washington hoped for a leadership that would hold itself above party. As President, Washington desired nothing more than to preside over and even symbolize a government of national unity. "I was no party man myself," he wrote to Jefferson in 1796, "and the first wish of my heart was, if parties did exist, to reconcile them." The danger of parties, Washington explained, is that they "render alien to each other those who ought to be bound together by fraternal affection." The first President's strategy for governing was consensus, not conflict.

When a policy of his was challenged, Washington charged that such opposition was the work of a "party," not realizing or not acknowledging that its supporters, as Richard Hofstadter remarked, also constituted a party. Even when Washington and other political leaders of the 1790s were engaged in conflict and factions, they rejected the idea of political parties, seemingly unaware that they were actually shaping embryonic political parties. At the end of his first term, still believing in a united government and in his own non-political role, Washington warned that "internal dissensions" were "harrowing and tearing our vitals." His farewell address alerted citizens to "the baneful effects of the Spirit of Party." His antagonism to parties mirrored the mentality of his generation.

Even so, the bitter and deep discord within Washington's own cabinet ultimately evolved into two opposing parties, the Federalists and the Republicans. Alexander Hamilton, secretary of the treasury, and Thomas Jefferson, the secretary of state, differed violently over almost everything — banks, tariffs, fiscal policy, foreign policy, presidential power. Attempting to mobilize congressional support for the Administration's economic policies, Hamilton began to form a political party around his fellow Federalists. Ironically, through his party-building efforts, he unwittingly galvanized the Republican opposition, which soon surpassed the Federalists in their organizational and propagandizing skills.

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The antipathy between the two burgeoning parties exploded in the early 1790s, in reaction especially to their opposing stands on the political turbulence in revolutionary France. While Federalists looked on with horror and revulsion at the shocking guillotining of Louis XVI and the lawless executions of the so-called enemies of the people, enthusiastic Republicans cheered their French brethren, hailing the radical revolutionary cause. Federalists branded their Republican adversaries "Jacobins," and Republicans returned the compliment by labeling the Federalists "monocrats." Each group portrayed its opponent as conspiratorial and treasonous, an ally either of reactionary England or sanguinary France.

In this climate of hostility and paranoia, Federalists and Republicans battled for the presidency. Jefferson showed himself extremely adept in partisan politics. The key to his success as a party builder was his passionate commitment to democratic ideals. His ability to inspire others with his vision of popular democracy and a classless society—a vision that disputed Federalist elitism—gained him fervent followers and a broad and solid political base. The people, Jefferson believed, could be rallied to the truth, their Republican spirit resurrected if they could be educated and persuaded to resist the "dupery practised on them" by Federalists.

Underlying Jefferson's belief in party politics lay his unshakable faith in majority rule, which he called a "fundamental law of nature." An organized, unified, and ideologically galvanized majority, by means of an election, could take over one, two, or even three branches of national government and proceed to fulfill—or to attempt to fulfill—its ideological agenda. The party and its leaders could conceivably govern the nation vigorously and freely. The majority could recapture its power and its voice from the anti-majoritarian system of checks and balances, making "energetic" government a possibility.

And how did the defeated Federalists feel about turning the reins of government over to men they loathed and feared? Was there no way to save the republic, Alexander Hamilton wondered, "from the fangs of *Jefferson*?" Would not the transfer of power "to hands hostile to the system heretofore pursued with so much success" jeopardize the new federal union? So angry and disturbed was Hamilton at the prospect of Jefferson's ascension to the presidency that he considered "the immediate calling together of the exiting Legislature" to block the election by declaring it invalid.

"In times like these in which we live," Hamilton wrote ominously to John Jay, "it will not do to be over-scrupulous. It is easy to sacrifice the substantial interests of society by a strict adherence to ordinary rules." He believed that he had a "solemn obligation" to "prevent an atheist in Religion, and a fanatic in politics, from getting possession of the helm of state." Resorting to Jacobin-style discourse, he even declared that blocking

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Jefferson's election "is justified by unequivocal reason of PUBLIC SAFETY." A few months later, however, his ambivalence toward John Adams and his obsessive antipathy for Aaron Burr led him to support Jefferson over Burr and to reject explicitly any attempt to thwart the election. "Mr. Jefferson's character," Hamilton conceded with a conciliatory, almost generous tone, "warrants the expectation of a temporizing, rather than a violent system."

After an initial cooling-down period, Federalists reacted to their defeat, not with talk of resistance, but rather as politicians who were accustomed to power and who were intent upon recapturing it. The game of majoritarian party politics would have to be played if Federalists were to regain control of the government. Hamilton admitted in April 1802 that "we must consider. . .employing the weapons which have been employed against us."

"*Nil desperandum*" wrote Gouverneur Morris when he learned of Jefferson's victory. "Let the chair of office be filled by whomsoever it may, Opposition will act as an outward conscience, and prevent the abuse of power." Out of power, the Federalists seemed to appreciate the essential contribution to democratic government that the opposition party can make. The opposition party, noted the Federalist Fisher Ames, must be "a champion who never flinches, a watchman who never sleeps." He advised Federalists to exploit to the fullest their new role of critic. "We must make it manifest that we act on principle," he wrote, "and that we are deeply alarmed for the public good. . . .We should. . .enjoy [our antagonists'] late advantages of finding fault, which popular prejudice is ever prone to listen to. We should soon stand on high ground, and be ready to resume the reins of government with advantage." But despite their sophisticated remarks about new strategies for the opposition party, the Federalists ultimately collapsed as a national party, unable to develop a rank-and-file organization and grass-roots support.

The strategy of party conflict had replaced the aspiration for consensus. Although Washington, Hamilton, and other founders had feared that political parties would weaken the nation, the opposite proved to be true. This early creation of organized opposition *strengthened* the young republic by according legitimacy to dissent. The nation was sufficiently unified in citizens' commitment to the Constitution to permit organized opposition to the party in power. The world of government and the world of party politics had become one.

American government would henceforth operate as a "strange hybrid," in the words of James MacGregor Burns, of the Madisonian political model, which aimed at stability in government, political equilibrium, and snail-like change, and the Jeffersonian model, which sought vigorous

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government and swift progress. One model envisioned change occurring through consensus and compromise, the other through ideological conflict. Although the two models continue to coexist and shape American political life, the Madisonian model—cast in a Constitution as enduring as stone—has always dominated the equation.

Despite Madison's and Jefferson's fundamentally different attitudes toward political power and majority rule, what they share—and what most distinguishes their political ideas from political thought in revolutionary France—is a core acceptance of political conflict. For Madison, conflict is organizational, taking place within the formal structure of government. For Jefferson, conflict is ideological, taking place in the realm of political ideas. Both political models tolerate and exploit division, faction, and opposition. Both models also seek to moderate conflict: one requires a wide consensus to overcome checks and balances, the other works best when parties and their ideas are broadly based.

Unity And Repression In France. On July 11, 1793, the celebrated artist David came to the Convention, voluminous notes and sketches in hand. He had come to lay out in detail for the members of the Convention his lavish plans for the *Fête de la Réunion*, the revolutionary festival of unity. It was to be an overwhelming, inspiring occasion, choreographed down to the smallest details. Every costume, every color, every song and gesture would contain some symbolic meaning. The sunrise itself would play a role in the revolutionary spectacle: people taking part in the festival would rise before dawn so that the emotional scene of their coming together in fraternity would be illuminated by the first rays of the sun.

The centerpiece of the pageant, the artist proudly explained, was to be a stupendous parade: first the members of political clubs would march; they would be followed by the representatives of the Convention; and finally and most importantly, the people themselves, the sovereign of France, would appear. This group, far larger than the others, would be drawn from all over France and from all walks of life—peasants, workers, artisans. David's elated voice rose as he elaborated on his artistic and symbolic intentions: spectators viewing the "people" on parade would not be aware of distinct individuals at all but would experience instead the merging of all identities into one, the one true collective revolutionary spirit. The majestic hero of the celebration was the oneness of the people.

When David finished outlining the scenario for the celebration, he hurriedly left the Convention to supervise final preparations. Representatives then resumed the work of the day. Billaud-Varenne spoke first. Angrily calling people's attention to a revolt taking place in Toulouse, he demanded the punishment of the citizens of Toulouse. No leniency, he

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sternly declared, must be shown to conspirators. Someone else denounced the representative Dillon. When Camille Desmoulins attempted to defend Dillon, his friends physically silenced him, insisting that they were only preventing Camille from dishonoring himself. Next the representative Mallarmé demanded the arrest of three deputies from Rhone et Loire, and finally on that day the representative Legendre demanded more mass arrests in Lyons.

Revolutionary business as usual—the two Janus faces of the Revolution, unity and exclusion, fraternity and terror. A combination well known to myriad revolutionary regimes that practice repression in the idealistic name of the people's unity. The French Revolution has served as the model for these "one-party democracies" that view internal opposition as a threat to their existences, that outlaw opposition, and that oppress and murder the adversaries of the "people." Why is it that unity and repression so often go hand in hand?

The Revolution's doctrine of unity and indivisibility had polarized the nation. If there was conflict, it had to occur, as R. R. Palmer noted, between the people and something that was not the people, between the nation and something alien to the nation. People were divided into two camps; in one camp were revolutionary friends and patriots, in the other, enemies and traitors. Virtuous people were on the inside; counterrevolutionaries were on the outside. Thus the corollary of the nation's unity is the exclusion of any individuals or groups that disrupt that unity. "The psychology of purging the heretic," Palmer remarked, "drew strength from this very yearning for cohesion."

Under the Old Regime in France, *lèse-majesté*—any kind of opposition to the king—had been a capital crime. Under the Revolution, any opposition to the unity of the revolutionary nation—*lèse-nation*—was similarly a capital offense. Any opinion, any proposal that could be considered divisive was anathema. Individuals who did not concur with the nation's interests and goals, who voiced their own private interests, who obstructed the people's will, who threatened the nation's unanimity were *enemies* to be banished or punished. Ultimately, the Convention would mandate the death penalty for any attempt to threaten *la République une et indivisible.* According to Saint-Just, "everything that is opposed to [the will of the French people] is outside the sovereign; everything that is outside the sovereign is the enemy." In 1794, in one of the last speeches he made before he was guillotined, Robespierre continued to maintain that there existed "only two parties, the party of good citizens and the party of evil ones."

Of course, from 1789 to 1794, the myth of unity was a veil behind which seethed disunity, dissension, and discord. Politicians, journalists, philosophers, economists disagreed on all the major issues of the day, as

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ordinary, rational people in any country would. Numerous factions—*Monarchiens, Brissotins, Feuillantistes, Montagnards, Girondins, Jacobins, Sansculottes, Chouans, Enragés, Dantonistes, Hébertistes, Robespierristes, Thermidoreans*—dotted the political landscape, making the simple schism in America between Federalists and Republicans seem, in comparison, positively unimaginative. But so spellbound were the French people by the myth and rhetoric of unity and so cynical were political leaders who used the myth of unity to isolate their adversaries and consolidate their own power, that even when citizens and politicians disagreed passionately with one another, they continued to condemn factions and parties as well as the very idea of organized opposition. Even when it was apparent that nothing existed *but* dissension and conflict, revolutionary leaders in France were blind to the idea of an inclusive polity in which a variety of political visions were tolerated as well as blind to the idea of parties that might cut across rather than exacerbate class divisions.

In the United States, Madison had made conflict among competing factions the organizing principle and stabilizing device of American government. Jefferson had made ideological conflict between two political parties the principal feature of American political culture. But in France, factions and parties were anathema. What justification could there be for bodies that represent "partial" and private interests in a nation of equal and self-sacrificing citizens, all committed to the "common good?" Such "particularisms," moreover, constituted unwelcome reminders of the privileged, elite bodies of the Old Regime. "No one knows better than I," proclaimed Mirabeau, "that the salvation of everything and of every one resides in social harmony and in the *annihilation of all factions*." "I abhor any kind of government," Robespierre stated succinctly, "that includes factious men." Saint-Just also weighed in, announcing that "factions are the most terrible *poison* in society." Danton echoed the party line: "You must absorb this truth: factions cannot exist in a republic." The fantasy that the solution to complex political problems lay simply in harmony and unity motivated Danton to declare that "fraternity alone. . .can give the Convention the sublime impetus that will define its path."

One of the most catastrophic blows to political pluralism was the Convention's decision in April 1793 to suspend the inviolability of its deputies, another grim step in the Revolution's downward spiral toward repression and terror. Henceforth duly elected representatives could be—and were—removed, prosecuted, and killed for nothing more than their minority views. The improbable argument was made that the inviolability that had cloaked the hereditary monarch must not be accorded to temporary, elected officials. Ironically, the moderate Girondins had been in favor of this idea no less than their radical Jacobin counterparts. Both sides, per-

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haps suicidally, imagined that they could profit from the exclusion of their adversaries. Neither group had the political intelligence or the commitment to democracy and individual rights to create institutional mechanisms and guarantees for the expression of dissent and opposition.

Politics is the art of persuasion, not annihilation. What French politicians did not grasp, as they were wiping out their political adversaries, is that political majorities and minorities are forever fluctuating, new coalitions always replacing old ones. Did they simply not know that, in the world of politics, political adversaries are potential friends and political allies are potential defectors, and that politics is largely the art of the deal? None of them viewed conflict as something that might add to rather than subtract from the nation. And as they spat out their vitriolic denunciations, their rage against the "monsters" who opposed them, they insisted that political change could somehow take place in a non-conflictual, harmonious arena.

The cult of unity that rejected non-violent political conflict led ironically but naturally to the most extreme form of conflict: murder and violence. But were not the precepts that made the Terror possible—the dogma of the oneness of the nation, the passion for equality at the expense of individual rights and freedom, the exclusion of factions and parties, the refusal to accord legitimacy to opposition—already present in Sieyès's original definition of the unitary revolutionary nation? To Sieyès's exclusionary formula for unity and concord, the Jacobins added their paranoia, their arrogance and intellectual shallowness, their desire for power, their taste for repression and punishment, and finally a lethal dose of violence. The fictitious idea of political unity, which mesmerized some revolutionaries while serving others as a cynical mask for political intimidation, became a terrifying and bloody reality under the blade of the guillotine.

In revolutionary America, terror never took over the legal system. During the War of Independence, the wealth of loyalists was occasionally confiscated, some acts of violence and vengeance were committed, and some people were killed, but neither then nor during the late 1790s were there any political trials that ended in a death sentence.

But lest we exaggerate the wisdom of the American Founders, we may ask whether Americans, had they been faced with the problems of hyperinflation, food shortages, a proliferation of provincial insurrections, radical mass street demonstrations, and extremist parties on the left and on the right, could have sustained their tolerance for conflict. The Alien and Sedition Acts as well as Jefferson's own forays into suppression of criticism demonstrate that respect for opposition was a lesson that took decades to be absorbed and integrated into the political culture. It is perhaps also fair to note that the harmony in Philadelphia that led to the adoption of the

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Constitution was possible only by avoiding conflict on—and agreeing not to resolve—the wrenching issue of slavery. That original consensus exploded in the 1850s, and in the ensuing Civil War, far more people died than in the Terror in France. The sister revolutions together teach the lesson that the cost of fleeing peaceful political conflict may be higher than that of meeting it head on.

Is there a role for unity and unanimity in a democracy? Yes. Richard Hofstadter explains that in a democracy there must be a "constitutional consensus" that binds both government and opposition, that is, a shared understanding that opposition is directed against a certain complex of policies, not against the legitimacy of the constitutional regime itself. In other words, the people must unanimously agree to disagree—according to the same rules. "There is only one thing about which there should be unanimous agreement," writes the political scientist Pierre Rosanvallon, "the recognition of the fact that a majority and an opposition that respect each other must confront each other and alternately hold power. This is the only consensus that is necessary, the democratic consensus."

Whereas revolutionaries in France outlawed opposition and prevented the evolution of political parties in the name of unity, the American Founders realized that social solidarity and the expression of opposition are not necessarily antithetical. Societies do not have to choose—as the French erroneously believed—between cohesion and ideological diversity. Indeed, the two are interdependent. The Jeffersonian model of rival parties produced enormous popular participation in political debate, thus creating a vital, inclusive polity and a dynamic, national political *community*. Indeed, Jefferson had warned that the greatest threat to freedom and democracy comes from the passivity of citizens. Liberty is lost when citizens withdraw from the public arena.

The *stability* of a democratic government, writes the political theorist Julien Freund, comes from the *instability* of competing interests and opinions. Conflict is and should be a permanent feature of democratic politics; it is not something to be transcended or avoided. If Sieyès and Robespierre offer a cautionary lesson, it is that the politics of unity, concord, and consensus are essentially repressive and anti-democratic. If Madison and Jefferson bear a message for us today, it is that significant social progress and lasting change emerge from the creative tension of adversarial politics.

The founders designed the American political system for conflict. We have integrated conflict into our institutions; we have normalized it and ritualized it; we have created rules and procedures for resolving it. And not only has the American system thrived on conflict, it has also been remarkably able to weather its shocks and jolts. Indeed, only two democracies, the

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United States and England (along with her offspring, Australia and Canada), withstood all the storms of the twentieth century—two world wars, fascism, Stalinism, a catastrophic economic depression. While the rest of the world reeled, while nation after nation fell and crumbled, those governments remained stable and intact, persevering in their careful, orderly ways. The key to their stability may well lie in their ability to tolerate, defang, and absorb conflict—political conflict, social conflict, external foreign aggression.

Lessons for today? If we see citizens uninvolved in the national political debate and in political parties, we may question how compelling and significant the agendas of those parties are. When our President and other national leaders shun resolute ideological stands and avoid the critical issues facing our society (such as the growing disparity of income between rich and poor) for the sake of concord, centrism, and a well-meaning but trivial domestic political agenda (seat-belts for infants, teen-age smoking, school uniforms, etc., etc.), they not only diminish themselves, they downgrade the importance of courageous political and moral leadership. They have misconstrued the very essence of democratic politics. For the essence of politics is conflict.

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SUSAN HAACK

The Best Man for the Job May be a Woman. . .

I recall, about a quarter of a century ago now, a job interview at which the chairman opened the proceedings by assuring me he had nothing against the employment of married women, he thought they might be quite good for the women students. I told him—vamping it up just a little—that, actually, I'd hoped to be good for the men (too). And that, naturally, was that. Was I the best person for the job? I don't know. But I could tell you a dozen such stories; and I'm pretty sure that at least once, yes, I was.

Still, by the time my temporary position at a woman's college came to an end, I had landed a real, tenure-track job—in a recently-founded university which as I recall then had about 300 faculty, of whom eight (including me) were women. Why were we so few? Sometimes the best candidate didn't get hired because of that reluctance to hire women I had encountered earlier; but some talented women found the geography impossible given a husband's career plans; some got discouraged at the graduate school stage; some never got to that stage because of discouragement from teachers or parents or peers. Doubtless, also, some women got discouraged from, or in, graduate school because they suspected they would encounter that reluctance, and some of the reluctance resulted from the belief that a woman would leave if her husband had an opportunity elsewhere. This was a pity; talented women were losing out, and universities were losing out too.

Is affirmative action a good solution to the kinds of problems I have described? The term seems to be used of a range of policies, from requiring that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure that women are not discouraged from applying and that procedures are fair, to requiring, overtly or by implication, that sometimes a woman be preferred even though she is not judged the best applicant. Though probably there are mixed and borderline cases, one can mark a key distinction by speaking of procedural-fairness policies, on the one hand, and preferential hiring policies, on the other. I assume it is not necessary to argue the desirability of the former; it is the latter kind of policy that generates all the excitement.

When the best candidate fails to get the job for no other reason than that she is a woman, that is, certainly, a bad thing; as I was moved to argue

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in the pages of *Philosophy,* twenty years or so ago, in response to an article arguing (yes, really!) that it was perfectly okay. Though I am sure discriminatory hiring is a bad thing, however, I am not sure preferential hiring is a good thing.

In fact, if the reason it's a bad thing if the philosophy department at Euphoric State fails to hire the best candidate because she is a woman, is—as I think it is—that *her sex is irrelevant,* it might look as if there is a very simple argument that preferential hiring is a bad thing. If what is bad is that an irrelevant consideration, the sex of the candidate, is influencing the process, how could it be any less bad to give preference to someone who is not the best candidate on the grounds that she is a woman, which requires the same irrelevant consideration to influence the outcome?

A common response is that sex *is* relevant after all: that appointing women contributes to a desirable diversity in the academy; that women are needed as role models; that women have special philosophical insight. The trouble with the first of these suggestions is that "diversity" has become (to borrow Barzun's phrase) one of those foam-rubber, public-relations words which muffles the otherwise obvious: that a philosophy department as varied as you like with respect to sex, race, ethnicity and all that, all of whom were students of Professor Davidson's working on adverbs ending in "-ingly" (or all of whom were students of Professor Harding's tracking down rape and torture metaphors in Newton—or whatever) would not, for all its diversity in one sense, be diverse in the sense that matters.

But perhaps *you* are imagining a department as intellectually diverse as you like, but all of whom are male Americans of Greek descent. Wouldn't there then be a case for hiring someone female, and/or not of Greek descent? If the idea is that this is a way to improve intellectual diversity, my reply is that there is a better way: read the candidates' work. If the idea is that, since *ex hypothesi* we already have intellectual diversity, social diversity is the next priority, my reply is that a university's priorities ought always to be the best possible intellectual work and teaching; quality of mind, not sex or ethnicity, should be the criterion.

But then I see that, if intellectual bent were significantly correlated with sex, ethnicity, race or whatever, neither of the scenarios just imagined would be possible anyway. So it is a relief to realize that the question of the relevance of sex doesn't need to be settled at this point. The argument considered above fails for reasons independent of the question of the relevance or irrelevance of sex; it relies on a confusion of "candidate who *is* the best" with "candidate who is *judged* the best."

Suppose the reason a woman doesn't get hired even when she's the best candidate is that women's abilities tend to be systematically undervalued; then a policy of preferring a female candidate even when she was not

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judged the best could result in the best candidate being hired after all. And, indeed, a pervasive disinclination to take women philosophers quite as seriously as men surely *is* part of the reason why a woman may not be judged the best even when she is. Furthermore, where junior appointments are concerned, merit is in considerable measure a matter of potential; and perhaps there is, still, enough subtle discouragement of young women to justify the thought that a given level of achievement at the new-PhD stage might indicate more potential in a young woman than in a young man.

It is often taken for granted that rules ensuring formal, procedural equality—"equal-opportunity" or "anti-discrimination" policies, as we say —would suffice (at least on the non-trivial assumption of an equal distribution of talent) for a representation of women equal to their representation in the applicant pool; with, perhaps, some indirect effects on the causes of their under-representation in that pool. But formal, procedural fairness does *not* necessarily guarantee equality of opportunity in hiring, can *not* by itself ensure that there is no covert disadvantage faced by women.

And now there looks to be a very simple argument that preferential hiring is a good solution: it's a way, albeit a back-handed way, of getting the best person appointed despite her sex. And if the man who is judged the best isn't the best, he is not really wronged when preferential hiring gives the job to a better, female, candidate.

But right away I start to worry about the price carried by the back-handedness. If it is known (even if it is falsely believed) that the policy is to prefer women even when they are not judged the best, many of those who are turned down will believe they have lost out to someone less capable than themselves. Doubtless, the resentment is often unjustified—for every man who has failed to land an academic job because of preferential hiring, there must be scores, at least, who *believe* they have—but it is real, and has real effects, nonetheless. Worse, when it is known that a policy of preferential hiring is in force, this encourages the belief—even when it is false—that when a woman is appointed, it is because she is a woman, not because she is the best. And this, besides tending to undermine women's confidence in themselves, encourages precisely that disinclination to take women academics quite fully seriously which sometimes prevents a woman being appointed when she is the best.

Now I see why that role model argument worries me. It is of course false that only a woman can be a role model for women, or that women can be role models only for women. More to the present point, there is the disturbing possibility that, by adopting a policy of preferential hiring, we will give young women—and young men—the impression that women aren't really worthy of academic positions. Even when it is false that this

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woman would not have been appointed had she not been a woman; even when it is true, but she was the best candidate anyway—her usefulness as role model is, not necessarily undermined, but potentially tainted. This may begin to suggest why attitudes to women in the academy now seem less thoughtlessly dismissive, more uneasily ambivalent: an edgy combination of the overtly indulgent and the covertly hostile.

While I have been worrying about bad indirect effects of preferential hiring, I have been assuming that it would, often enough, have the desirable direct effect of getting the best person appointed despite her sex. This looks obvious once one grants that there may be a systematic undervaluation of women's abilities; nevertheless, I have a nasty suspicion that it isn't true.

Thinking of a systematic undervaluation of women's abilities by, say, ten percent, we feel assured that, under a policy of preferring a woman if she is judged to fall within ten percent of the best, the best candidate would get the job even if she's a woman. But this requires a further assumption: that the best woman would get the job. As she *would,* if what ordinarily happens were that a straightforward effort is made to appoint the best person, skewed only by that annoying tendency to underestimate the merit of women candidates. But this is by no means always what happens (a thought that brings to mind the senior member of the department where I earned my PhD who, after I was hired for that tenure-track job, was heard to say of my new chairman: "poor X, forced to appoint on grounds of merit. . . .").

Sometimes women don't get positions that they should; sometimes men don't, either. The problem isn't only (though it is partly) that when there are hundreds of applications, impossible to read them all, "contacts," those off-the-record phone calls, and so forth, are bound to be significant. Nor is it only (though it is partly) that philosophical ability is so subtle, so many-faceted, and the criteria used often so narrow and so crude, over-valuing the confident and the fluent and under-valuing the less flashy but deeper thinker, over-valuing the "productive," as we say, and under-valuing the slower but more rigorous or creative mind. Worse: the hiring process is too often less a straightforward if ill-informed and clumsily-conducted effort to identify the best candidate, than an unseemly struggle of greed and fear.

Greed: we want someone who will improve the standing of the department, who has contacts from which we might benefit, who will willingly do the teaching we'd rather not do, who will publish enough so the tenure process will go smoothly. Fear: we don't want someone so brilliant or energetic that they make the rest of us look bad, or compete too successfully for raises and summer money, or who will vote with our enemy on controversial issues. We look, in short, for someone who "fits in." (The foam-rubber PR term is "collegiality.")

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Hence the faction-fights; a candidate who excites the greed of some is quite likely to excite the fear of others. Hence the dismaying tendency—even when the market favors the buyer as much as it does now—to appoint *more of the same*, whether "the same" happens to be the grayly mediocre or the flashily self-confident. (If the word hadn't been ruined by its promotion to slogan, I might be tempted to speak of "diversity" myself at this point.) No one wants to admit, even to themselves, that they are moved by greed and fear rather than merit; so we tell ourselves, though of course we don't entirely succeed in believing it, that fitting in *is* merit. Hence the hypocrisy, double-talk, self-deception, and sheer confusion. (Not long ago I heard a chairman indignant about allegations of racism protest: "my department, racist? That's ridiculous! Why, they FORCED me to appoint a woman last year. . .").

Now I see why I doubt that a minimal policy of preferring the woman if two candidates are judged equal-best would help much. Since the candidate appointed would always have been judged at least equal-best, this should not have the same tendency to encourage the idea of women's unworthiness; though it would still, doubtless, create resentment among unsuccessful candidates. But there is the same reason as before to wonder whether it would get the, or even a, best candidate appointed; and in practice what I'd expect is the same old shabby politics ensuring that a tie is, or that it isn't, reached—as procedural-fairness policies are sometimes circumvented by decorating short-lists with the names of women who are in no danger of being hired.

Plenty of male candidates, including sometimes the best person for the job, fail the fitting-in test (too specialized, too broad; too quiet, too glib; didn't go to the right school, is bound to try to move somewhere more prestigious; and so on). But since the majority of the profession, and more of the more senior ranks, still, is male, female candidates are apt to fit in, by and large and on the whole, less well than male; for trivial reasons (perhaps they have a hard time hiding how little discussions of football—in my case, it was cricket—thrill them), and not-so-trivial (plenty of men are, still, more comfortable with women as secretaries, wives, students, than as colleagues). Small wonder, then, that "forced to appoint a woman," sometimes departments hire, not the best woman, but the least threatening: the conventional, the conformist, the student of one's own mentor, or, failing that, the specialist in feminist philosophy, who, though not "one of us," needn't, in private anyway, be taken *quite* seriously—and might earn us points with the Dean.

Now is as good a time as any to say the little I have to say about the idea that there are special insights which women, *qua* women, can bring to philosophy. In my experience, the intellectual differences among individu-

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als are far, far more significant than any supposed commonalities among women. (To be sure, women who have been taught at an impressionable age that there are women's ways of philosophizing *do* manifest a certain uniformity of thought; it would be surprising if they didn't, but it is of no relevance that they do.) It is discouraging enough when the special insights claimed for women are, as they sometimes are, reminiscent of those old, sexist stereotypes of women as emotional, intuitive, and all that. It is even more discouraging when the claim is that women bring special insights *because they are oppressed*—which (unless, unlike myself, one is convinced by the epistemological pronouncements of Marx or Foucault or their admirers) is apt to prompt, besides the worry that it will promote a tendency to dwell excessively on our grievances, the protest that it neglects to mention the most important qualities talented women have to offer philosophy—logical acumen, textual sensitivity, creative imagination, analytic rigor, conceptual penetration, and subtlety.

But that individualistic, old-fashioned-feminist thought, unlike the special-insight idea, may not be so congenial to those who formerly managed to confine women to the old ghetto of the permanently-temporary lecturer, and when "forced to appoint a woman," wouldn't altogether mind if the woman they are forced to appoint confines herself to what Harriet Baber has shrewdly identified as the new pink-collar ghetto of academia; nor does it offer any relief to the cognitive dissonance of those who would like to think they're hiring on merit, but are under pressure to treat sex as relevant; nor any comfort to those, of both sexes, who still harbor a lingering suspicion that maybe women *can't* do philosophy, as traditionally conceived; nor the same opportunities for—well, for opportunism.

I don't doubt that preferential hiring has sometimes done good, that it has, in some cases, led to the appointment of women who would not otherwise have been hired, and who are such good philosophers, and such straightforward people, that they have advanced our discipline *and* helped to ease their students and colleagues out of any disinclination, conscious or otherwise, to see women as full participants in the life of the mind. But I also think it has done harm; and, I fear, more harm than good, failing reliably to get the best person appointed, feeding men's reluctance to take women seriously and women's diffidence about their own abilities, diverting energy into efforts to show the relevance of sex, and undermining our already enfeebled sense that it *matters* whether the best person gets the job. No wonder it makes me so uncomfortable; it pulls both against taking philosophy seriously, and against taking serious women philosophers seriously.

The question about preferential hiring of women is the point at which a whole tangle of issues about women in the labor market, not all of which have anything specifically to do with academia, intersects with a whole

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tangle of issues about the gross over-supply of PhDs and dubious hiring practices in the academy, not all of which have anything specifically to do with women. It was never realistic to hope to fix this mess of problems by a crude readjustment at a single, late stage; and never realistic, either, not to anticipate that such a crude readjustment as preferential hiring would introduce new distortions, new resentments, new hostilities. "Late" is important. That someone might have been a fine philosopher had she not suffered this disadvantage or discouragement as a child is a waste and a shame; but though we can try to prevent it happening in the future, we can't fix it now by treating her as if she *is* a fine philosopher.

Qua woman in my profession, I can't have much direct effect on the many interacting factors outside the academy that have held women back. I and women like me can, however, have some *in*direct effect: students who learn from our example that women *can* be full participants in the work of the intellect will later be parents, schoolteachers, employers. And there are things we can do to bring the goal of a profession genuinely open to talent a bit closer: the best work of which we are capable, of course; treating all our students, regardless of eye-color or whatever, as individuals; grading anonymously, and explaining to our colleagues why that matters; advising younger women about the realities of the job market, salary negotiation, dealing with editors and publishers, the tenure process—it shouldn't *have* to be women who do that for other women, but someone's got to do it. . .; working on those obstacles of geography and timetable which particularly affect women. And, the most essential and the most difficult thing: figuring out how to clean up the hiring process.

It *will* be difficult. But only a genuine meritocracy will achieve what I want to see—what I hoped twenty-five years ago I would live to see: a profession in which the best people get the jobs regardless of their sex or any irrelevant etceteras.

What I have had to say here has been restricted to preferential hiring of women for academic positions, in fact, mainly to hiring in philosophy. Some of the arguments I have used would extrapolate to other instances; but it is far from clear to me that the issues are in all respects parallel where race is concerned, or where the admission of students is concerned, or with regard to jobs where there are likely to be large numbers of to-all-intents-and-purposes interchangeable applicants. Insofar as I have a general thesis, indeed, it is precisely that the issues surrounding affirmative action are far, far more complicated than the stale old familiar arguments acknowledge.

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JOHN THOMPSON

Benediction

As he comes into view—as we fetch him into view—he looks small indeed from our superior position in space and in time. Under the patiently shedding maples, the solitary little villain trudges eastward along the south sidewalk of simple straight empty asphalt Logan Street. Not an aproned housewife, not a delivery man nor the blue mail carrier is anywhere to be seen. The very dogs of the neighborhood have taken the afternoon off.

Each from its squared site in the exact middle of its own shrub-bedecked and bushy plot, in formation of facing ranks north side and south all the block long, all the four blocks long, the homes present themselves stoutly, unblinking, shoulder to shoulder. Each is brick-chimneyed, well-roofed, strongly-porched, appropriately bow-windowed or bayed. Fortress-proud, each stands in full readiness to shelter its family come what may.

Early October, the sun is still high and warm. The boy is topped off with the tassel of his beanie. For blazon his wool sweater sable displays chevrons indented in azure. The elastic bands of his corduroy knickers and knee socks have slackened down his calves. His high black tennis shoes with white laces scuff through maroon, brown, red, yellow leaves. That is the only sound. His breeches, washed limp, no longer whistle.

Earlier, for we enjoy the freedom of whatever time or space may be, earlier he and his companion rascals dawdled their way to school plunging and tumbling in billows of the raked windrows, chirping; dust of the mortal husks teased their nostrils and throats. Later, we know, in the evening, rings of flamelet quick as a pool's ripple from a thrown stone will ignite these heaps into Vesuvian bonfires, there in those free and far-off times innocent of air pollution. To many of us, autumn will always be those first chilled evening airs, more poignant than any trailing perfume of blossoms in its opposite equinox, heady as the fumes of fat Cuban cigars, hazy, sere, thick, permeating like banks of fog the atmospheric dome of our mid-western maple towns, impregnating our jackets, scarves, and caps, but sweet, sweet as the syrup expressed from these trees, and deciduous, all gone to earth, worlds of wanwood, ashes to ashes. Only the sacrificed spirit remains, expired and drifting, pervasive as grief, smoke. At festival's end the crematory embers may yield a few charred blistering potatoes or chest-

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nuts. And then, too, over these same curbs and gutters only a few months hence shovel and plow will raise mountain ranges of snow, heaped high around the trunks of these trees whose skeleton winter twigs must then rattle and scratch at the glouring skies—what slopes though for jumping and sliding and pelting! But now the little man shows no inclination for play. In fact, as we bring our telescopic gaze more directly to bear, we observe his cheeks to be smudged with ineffectively-knuckled tears.

We are permitted to know why. Within the red brick Rhine Castle of Sigsbee School, all turreted and quoined and porticoed in trim of white limestone on its sprinkled and mowed hillock—whence our modern Djinns have long since whisked it away, to conjure in its place a block of quadrilaterals in hue at once glaring and sickly like slime on a dying pond and fixed by grids of corroding aluminum slats—within, then, when it was still a castle, Dick had been despatched from his sunny kindergarten room to mount the heavily paneled and banistered cavern of dark stairwell between the steepled newel posts in eerie silence to the office of Miss Hoeksma the nurse.

As he lay on her long black leather couch, knees drawn up, she let fall first into one ear then the other warm oil from her eye-dropper. At the foot of the couch, a chart on the wall pictured a human being about his own height displaying its red and blue insides with rows of black printing up and down around it. He managed a bitter pill. Not once had he cried until she sat him up and hugged him against her starched white breast next to the Red Cross pin. Her eyes so close were two pale blue glassies, fractures of light within them, and her yellow hair was tied like a rope around her head where the sail of her cap perched. Had she not been so dreadfully near to him, had her clean fingers been less bluntly, squarely pink-nailed, he might have desperately loved her. But her clarity shone like a searchlight into the murkiness of his own being, glaring on the black mysterious core of his guilt—she would see it as plain as the exposed stomach of the figure on the wall and if he could not make it out himself he felt it surely enough, guilt and shame like some horrid growth to be concealed at all costs. Was not his earache a sign of it, whatever it was? But in a lightning flash gone before it could register, the pressure of love for her broke, burst away in a hidden down-rush of hatred and both were gone forever.

Her instructions, we can easily imagine, confused him. Surely she would never knowingly have sent the child off alone to an empty house! But so he took her words. Out one of the big brass-handled double oaken doors he made his way, slowly enough. Far atop the white flagpole almost into our own exalted if sublunary sphere flaps good old Stars and Stripes. I can say that he felt much as a creeping mouse might feel on some grander granite porch if the portals of one of your great cathedrals swung closed

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behind him in broad daylight. But it is with a violence known to no shy mouse that again a sulfurous discharge strikes in his heart and for him Sigsbee School is no more than some old witch's gingerbread house. A boy could kick it down. It was all in the blink of any eye, a flare, out, over with. Then the sky is still blue, the flag still aloft. So there the school stands, he is alone, no snow-white bird to guide him with its song, this outcast. (One may wonder what pangs and surmises were smothered by Nurse Hoeksma and Teacher when they asked each other the whereabouts of Dick.)

Still, is he not far better off than some lone jack tar set adrift who will say why, to bob in his dinghy as his ship's mastheads fade beyond the rim of the Ocean Sea? It is no more than half a mile all told to Dick's own by-street.

At this very moment, to the West six miles or so as the crow flies, all the way across town over the railway tracks and near the river, beyond the factories of Godfrey Avenue, we can spot alongside the spur line in the dusky yard of S.A. Morman & Co., Coal and Ice, an enormous hopper. With its rickety-looking conveyor it looms above the village of corrugated iron sheds and the great mounds of coal. Some few of these newly wet-down shine like black diamond pyramids. Viewed from our imaginary angel's roost, the hopper's huge square maw most wickedly and vertiginously, had we any such weakness, invites the acrophobic to plunge.

All but concealed in the bay beneath this giant funnel is a truck. The gritty air, as we focus our gaze through it, is deaf with a wide stunned yawn and void to the far horizon where vanishes shimmering the last echo of concussion; the steel truck bed has just taken its fall, three tons of coal.

A black man in bib overalls and the sort of mattress ticking loaf-shaped cap railroaders use stands quartered beside the hopper, circling his left hand.

"Huh mahn baa," he calls, "Mahn baa." Mighty tailgate first the vehicle emerges.

As the driver clambers from cab to toolbox lid and hops down to the yard, foreshortened as he is in our perspective we observe that he is a hefty fellow of energetic movement. He disappears beneath the shed roof. The black man is sluicing assiduously from a hose on the truck. It is enameled in that deep emerald called today "British Racing" and smartly crimson-striped. Bold block serif letters in white, outlined again in crimson striping, state its sponsor and mission. Scrubbed with a long-handle brush the juggernaut bright-banded wood-spoke artillery wheels and even their brutal block-cleated tires glisten. The sharply-raked French style bonnet with its slanted vent lines receives some chamois polishing, and reaching high up the helper dabs at the radiator cap ornament of the five-ton Model

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AC. The driver, waybill and trip ticket in hand, resumes his post, his helper re-hangs the scoop, chute, and two canvas baskets in their positions on the frame, mounts the bright embossed running board, climbs up, slam. The open chain drive clanks on its sprockets, and rumbling profoundly from its deepest interior the machine is away.

All this of course is quite unbeknownst to poor Dick, although expected and indeed arranged by his father. Mr. Alford has put down $15.00 for delivery including two sacks of fireplace cannel coal and dearly hopes this will see them through the Michigan winter.

Should it seem strange to you that we know so much, even to things quite unsuspected by those whose thoughts we dare describe, and that we observe trivial matters long forgotten or never recognized at all by those present in these scenes—why, we could if we cared to do it write down even the deepest secrets of these two truckers. Luckily we needn't bother. Remember, we are as exalted above our subjects as any biographer condescending to his "noble" patriot or to his "great" poet. He can spy out and expose the mean forked creature hiding behind however many sheaves of honors! But be assured or be warned, we are promised for all our troubles few such excitements.

Still, we have an instance of how our powers of divination penetrate the minds of those we observe. Were we to tell Dick this is not the first time he has been alone in his house, he would not believe us. His "merciful censor" has let perish the day he returned here some months ago after his guilty tricycle flight, coming home from that same Sigsbee School yard to find the house deserted.

Big Sister, Little Dorothy, the girl-of-all-work Lena, everyone gone; his mother was gone forever. Nobody home. He has forgotten. So far as he knows, this is the first time he has ever been alone in any house, and even so it doesn't occur to him in so many words. He has entered the side door by the driveway. From the shelf he retrieved one of those old bow-stemmed long iron "skeleton" keys that would pass the wards and trip the simple bolt of any lock in town. He unlatches the kitchen door two steps above the icebox there on the landing, convenient for the iceman when he responds to the placard in the front window requesting by its position a block of 25, 50, 75 or even 100 pounds. The icebox is golden oak, it must weigh a ton; they knew no better in those ignorant days than to cast hinge and latch of solid brass and for sturdiness extend all flanges in petals of fleur-de-lis for solid seats to the brass screws. These safes were hard to get rid of when overnight they became obsolete, but at least one no longer had to remember every day or so the drip pan that lurked underneath.

Surely that iceman had no objection to entering an empty house, with his pincing tongs, his icepick and all.

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Besides, he has his faithful companion plodding Dobbin, pulling the ice wagon from house to house, a few paces away. Dobbin would be half asleep behind his blinkers, mumbling some sugar cubes. Perhaps he drops a few neatly formed oatsy road-apples, and fluttering out of nowhere in a ruffle of tiny feathers the innocent sparrows cock their little heads and hop, peck, hop, peck.

And being alone in a house is nothing to you or me—yet don't we sometimes in an empty house try to extend our perceptions throughout its hollows, and don't we in our stories and in our dreams, as if we were unwilling to conceive of a place totally uninhabited, furnish the vacancies at least an apparition for tenant? When we were kids, any dwelling that stood vacant awhile and neglected was known to us as "the haunted house" where we dared all comers to pass a night.

Alone—what harm can he do all alone? There is nobody there to be harmed or to do harm. An intruder he is, but intruding on what? Why of course upon the house itself. We know that in stories again and in dreams, houses are not mere sticks and stones. *So much of mankind's varied experience has passed there. . . .*It was itself, that House of the Seven Gables, *like a human heart. . . .*What were the old timbers but its skeleton frame? *At windy times it would bellow in its sooty throat (the big flue, we mean, of its wide chimney. . . .)* But Dick's house has no voice, not yet anyway; later he may have occasion to fancy, almost, a certain animation as of flesh and bone. Now like Goldilocks he yearns only for something in its abandonment to comfort him in his own. No one has set out even one bowl of porridge to cool on this kitchen table. And in the silence of the house his earache concentrates itself evilly, pressing hot tears once more from his eyes.

Middle ear infections are common in children, so medical science informs us. A child's short and straight Eustachian tube readily conveys bacteria to an ear; the adult is blessed with a longer upward angled passage. Invading the middle ear, these bacteria foment a pressure of fluid behind the tender eardrum resulting in considerable pain and sometimes affecting the labyrinth or semi-circular canals themselves, whence we receive our signals of balance. If an infection goes untreated, the fluid pressure can break the eardrum. Such inflammation in the old days before antibiotics could develop into dread mastoiditis threatening the very brain. Luckily Dick doesn't know any of this lore nor indeed will such peril arise for him. But what can he do? The house has received him but it is not prepared to play nurse or nanny, let alone the role so much more intimate than those and so absent now. Lost—and how can empty absence weigh on us like all the shouldered world—"bear our losses"—meanwhile we search for what seemed lost. How could it truly be lost and gone and remain such a heavy burden? But at last the pro-

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cedures of our souls do not lend themselves so very well to physical analogy, do they.

Next the kitchen in the pantry alcove Dick drags open the flour bin drawer and from its lip cleverly mounts to the countertop. One long stretch over the void to the next cupboard and he has it! Oh but his foot slips, tumble, down goes Dick. And down cracking him smartly right on top of his skull flies the hefty chunk of maple sugar so nearly grasped.

All is not lost. A walnut's worth of the candy loaf has fractured free. Sucking this lump he manages his forlorn way into the living room and to the day bed against the stairwell wall. On the stiff dark blue brocade he curls up, tugs the afghan over to enfold him. One sunbeam spills through from the dining room but here behind the roof of the eastern front porch all is dim. And silent. Sweet syrup slowly dissolves in his cheek. Does a brain tumor extort such pain? Were a wine cork sentient how but with a squeak should it protest the spiral hook winced into its bark until at the welcome plop! all is débouchée. Would that we might so deftly withdraw the morbid gall of this earache. He hugs his hands between his thighs. His eyelids fall. Come, care-charmer sleep.

Now is the time, as Dick snoozes, for us to remind ourselves of the sad cause of Dick's distress. He himself in his proper mind knows no more of it than he knows he is not for the first time alone in the house—it is out of awareness, as we say. Still who can tell what knowledge is in his bones. And the prudent man, however skeptical, will take care of his thoughts lest they be in some form transmitted even to one sound asleep. But we must state that the simple fact is, in that day, nor medical men nor friends and neighbors nor Father's own tender feelings advised that Dick should be told the truth. Better he should never know that the dark downward spiral into black melancholia bore faithful earnest loving Ellen Alford at last to suicide.

Your ordinary truck, it is true, is often as not a piteous sight to see, cowering and creeping like a slave or donkey beneath some ungainly heap, a rattletrap, groaning and whining uphill on hands and knees, downhill desperately scuttling to keep up with the runaway load, fenders cauliflowered, frame rust-caked, bed staked no better than a Tobacco Road garden patch, braced or bailing-wired who knows how, banging and backfiring, more than likely even smelling bad. But not ours! Let it have without presumption a Homeric tag, *the tall cart with pretty wheels* in the poet's epithet, *and a proper wagon-bed fitted atop it*, the one that carried Nausikaa's laundry to her goddess-fated encounter with Odysseus. Never with more aplomb did Maharajah's golden-tusked pachyderm in bejeweled panoply lightly and high aloft bear the royal howdah than sports our vehicle its gleaming

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steel box conveying a mere few tons of anthracite. The progress is nearly as stately too. No green amber and red lanterns control these intersections, no whistle-tooting blue coats; those are reserved for the key corners of downtown, assuring a fit approach to Bank and Hotel. Nor would it be seemly for our truck to assert its overwhelming power at these outlying junctions or to blast its mighty air trumpet to scatter common traffic. "S.A. Mormon & Co. Coal & Ice" must comport itself as an engine of consequence and responsibility, yield to clattering streetcar, to horse-drawn wagon or any lowly transport. So it hisses at corners not in exasperation but from the sheer excess power of its air brakes, ponders through its chain and sprocket gears and rolls sedately, buoyed on elastic spring shackles and humming above its exclusive rubber engine mountings.

Blocks long after blocks long the streets here between the rail marshaling yards and river are lined with the manufactories of the city's wealth and ambiguous fame. They are three, four, sometimes five stories of common brick, the gaunt unintended grace of practical builders. Banks of tall windows, six-on-six lights, delicately chamfered frames painted white, these stencil a pattern within the coarse masonry walls as if of airy trellises.

Beyond Keeler Brass, we pass Berkey & Gay, John Widdicomb, Woodworking is a cleanly sort of trade. What the Dutch craftsmen inside are doing amidst the sawdust, or the Polish women who scrub until they keel over from the fumes of "French" finish, this is no concern of ours. Labor then by the light of the day, for the night comes when no man may work. Soon enough the world will discover it no longer needs the sturdy home furniture of Grand Rapids, so long prized in the many new households of our then new families, fittings so derided by devotees of bow-legged fauteuils called after some bewigged Louis or other. More window-pierced walls. At last the Roman aqueducts failed but the steep arches of their engineers remain monuments nobler than all the postured Emperors in marble. Uncaring, our machine rounds the bend of Godfrey Avenue towards unmonumental Franklin Viaduct, cab commandingly high over other traffic.

From his supine sprawl on the living room rug Dick plays his ceiling game. Upside down, the blank ceiling is the floor of an absolutely empty room. Its cornice moldings outline exactly the irregular oblong of that room, a vacant space with not a stick to its name. He has placed it under an enchantment of blankness, and there it is, a room windows and all with nothing in it. Why he has exerted this spell he does not question but from his peculiar vantage, not altogether unlike now I come to think of it our own Olympian stance, merely inverted, he muses at this bewitched room

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of his. Staring so, he could even be spying on us invisible as we are! It is an uncanny moment. A Victrola melody of long ago somewhat scratchily in one of its versions chants not to him but to us:

> I went down to St. James Infirmary
> Just to see my sweetie there
> She was stretch on a long white table
> So thin so cool so bare.

Over he turns to the right-side-up and furnished world. Opened before him on the rug is a volume of the blue leatherette Encyclopedia to the page that shows how our digestion is done. A model man of gigantic construction has two squads of little men just inside his mouth, all in white coveralls and caps, wielding mauls and sledges. They mash up the lumps of food coming in there. Next, down the chute of his throat more little men dump wheelbarrows while others squirt from faucets. Way down in the stomach the crew labors over large vats and cauldrons stirring and straining amidst all kinds of valves and plumbing. There is a big winding drainpipe that spirals down to the end of another chute and another crew shovels up stuff and carts it off in wheelbarrows. Dick knows what this is.

On the next page the figure's giant head is shown, opened up. It is full of coiled cables. In his eyes he has telescopes and cameras, some upside down, in his nose electric fans, and little men with bass drums and telephones in his ears. But Dick has scant interest in this cerebral industry. Back on the shelf slides the slippery blue volume, forgotten like the earache that fled with whatever adventures may have troubled or entertained his few minutes as Sleeping Beauty. Goblins, giants, or ice-cream cakes—we did not monitor the brief headful, buried now as deep as the earth once consigned eons ago its monster fauna and flora to convert themselves to reservoirs of other value. The hearth is beside him empty and cold.

The silence of the house is not really silence nor is its emptiness a void. Yet now it seems as strange as was his topsy-turvy ceiling place. We know that all the things our rooms contain—whether threatening like the diabolical bookcase and pier glass on Marcel's first sleepless night at Balbec or mothering, grandmothering, like his Paris furniture—*Ils n'étaient*, as Proust says, *plus que des annexes de mes organes*—indeed only the extensions of our own bodies, enlargements of ourselves. What then is there to threaten here? Surely the family of mute servants that life-long—all Dick's life long—have peopled so faithfully the living room in the decent simple cloths, draperies, runners or throws given them as their service deserves, these old retainers could never cause distress. Whence extends this faint alarm, inaudible, invisible, intangible, the thinnest emanation of some mag-

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net too weak, too diffuse, for any compass? Overhead the lonely chambers long for him and dread him.

Then let us get on with it. You will have foreseen that our little hero has to explore the haunted house. No need to inventory the whole place as he goes, although we could do it down to the cost of this and that scrap and count over the contents of china closet and kitchen drawers; we stand ready if challenged to produce the notarized accountings. But such interiors are as well known to all of us as this one is to Dick. These houses, new in his young days, still stand, if declined a bit in social status, and if their lumpy mohair chairs and oak-plank Mission tables, fringed lamps, taborets, upright pianos have long since been discarded, there remains for us to see should we come visiting the paneled hall with its flanking stout varnished pillars that draws him now to the stairwell.

We need not follow him step by step. Alone, he is free for his absent-minded violations. What if he should be merely peopling as best he can this emptiness, as an actor might "step in" to understudy a fellow gone missing? From the bathroom cupboard he lifts one of his father's two razors from the fitted case, climbs atop the toilet seat to command the mirror and in a way that certainly makes me anxious draws the long desperate bright blade over his cheek. Without accident!

He snoops from upstairs room to room. Among burglars, so we are told, there are those drawn to their profession less by the booty than by the thrilling impropriety of it, of the secret prowling through the revealed effects precious or not of other and all-unsuspecting persons. From Sister's dresser drawer he picks a white broad-strapped brassiere, for her a new appurtenance, and holds it up over his sweater. Beneath it lay her latched leather-bound Diary but it is no use to him, he has yet to connect his ABC's in anything but their series. The wings of the triple mirror over the dressing table show him the back of his head, and then fiddled with they display the peculiar sight of a profile that might as well be the broadside view of some schoolmate for all he can see in its pink cheek and indiscriminate nose.

He has been hanging back, and once more he balks. Behind that closed door lies his mother's sewing room. He knows its shade is drawn, knows its machine that hummed to the treadle and pulley and halted, hummed and halted, is shrouded now. No, he does not fancy he hears those murmurs again. Really, he is only playing at hide-and-seek!

How could he, a kindergarten truant, even in childish cartoon picture anything like the world-instructed apparition the expatriate Spencer Brydon found himself *thrilled and flushed with* when he prowled through his own parents' emptied house on the Jolly Corner in old, or new, or oldly new, New York—in James's ghost words: *His dread of his opening a door*

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behind which he would have made sure of finding nothing, a door into a room shuttered and void, and yet so coming, with a great suppressed start, on some quite erect confronting presence, something planted in the middle of the place and facing him through the dark... It was he himself James's Brydon was in terror tracking down, the other self he might have been. Our own little man would have found himself quite unable to say what he might be tracking, if that was what he was doing and perhaps in terror. We can scarcely imagine it ourselves. Haunting or being haunted?

More suitable to his slight age perhaps that we call it as we did only some vestige of a game at hide-and-seek, such as on a night after the innocent real twilight neighborhood game was called to its close by parents singing names—such as one might in a dream fearfully play again in sleep.

Was it Dick himself who gave that paneled door the nudge to send it swaying open on its hinges? Quicker than startled birds his small fingers flew to his eyes and sealed them.

But then, when he breathes and dares there is nothing, nothing at all, nothing is there.

Mr. Truck is now highballing due East along Sherman Street, defended against interruption by STOP signs at the crossways of leafy innocently-named Bemis, Ethel, Shirley, Norwood.

Our tender juvenile we next see as he descends the basement steps. Whether or not he is purged of his fancies by the non-revelation of the sewing room, we couldn't tell by his glancing demeanor. Something draws him, even as it strongly drew James's proper hero, to the cellar, *to the parts at the back*, as the author has it in his tale of narcissism: *You don't care for anything but yourself*, says faithful Alice to Brydon. What if that were true too of Dick? Or perhaps he is only beginning to learn that the world he must explore and handle is something different from himself, apart—may we not claim then that he is not merely self-regarding but rather in a pristine state of monistic or cosmotheistic innocence.

Down there, it is dim, dim rough-sawn timbers overhead atop square posts, dim brick chimney base, next it squats the enormous cold furnace with its branching ducts, in the far end the jointed cast iron soil drain to the sewer. There is space enough for a hundred boxes and tins and tools to hide in. Sink; washing machine. In those things are tears. The dusty twilight of the coal bin's small window reveals it hoards a last heap in its corner.

Dick unlatches the cast iron furnace door, one worn hinge lets it hang

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a bit slack-jawed. There inside on the lip all day and all night in the ardor of burning coal would squat his mother's fat bean pot. From the other breech below, his father would shovel out the ashes and shake the groaning grinding grid with the long handle so like the crank that starts his car—rake out the clinkers. Some day Dick himself would do that and fire up the furnace too.

Rather obviously our long delayed convergence is about here. But first Dick has an urgency of his own and not entirely welcome just at this time, for he is after all quite by himself now. He certainly knows how to answer the call of nature without assistance, no diapered infant he. Yet as he climbs again the hollow reverberating second floor stairwell his inner rumblings may be stirring likewise some devoutly-to-be-forgotten archeologies of failure in this matter, failures too recent for the pride of his years. He is alone and will have to shift for himself. Dick sets out on one more of the day's pilgrimages, all of them so lonely and foreboding to him.

Manfully he settles to the task. No doubt it would be well received by all concerned if we could only leave him to it in decent privacy, but the events to occur call for our quite neutral and sober witness, at least, as we say, up to a point, when we may withdraw our attention in favor of the rolling truck. Until then, we must report that his knickers and BVD's are coiled over his tennis shoes that swing free some inches clear of the bathroom linoleum. An awkwardness of the BVD being of one piece although it boasts to be sure a flap for these purposes but risky he concluded—the awkwardness is that he has had to divest himself of sweater and jersey to strip down the undergarment. So but for the encumbrance of his ankles he is naked. Let us at least partially avert our gaze but not leave this poor innocent, for I take it we are persons of balance about the physical economies of animals. Even the urologist's daughter was hesitant here, *stalling along. Bowels are not exactly a polite subject for conversation*, but as Miss Hepburn knew, *Life has some problems that are basic for all of us*. She overcame her natural reticence to tell the special problems of sharing a Congo outhouse with the Bogies. Strange how few other writers have thus mastered their modesty. To Swift these matters are obsessively revolting, to Rabelais endlessly side-splitting; to Col. Cantwell by the river they made a ritual for his own commemoration. From children themselves and from their explicators we learn of the magic significance it holds for them. But from whom else and in what books? It is a spare record. To Leopold Bloom of course natural *mulch of dung*, as simple to his humanity as he is to the nature of all men or so human as we might wish all men could be. And yes, Henry Miller. . .But let us not wonder that our authors, our public voices, have been so reticent. Rather be grateful this process has not inspired the endless song, sonnet, story, pageant, dance, commandments and litigation,

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punishments, statuary, painting, costumery, cosmetic and all artistry, ceremonies and sacraments as has its so-notoriously nigh anatomical proximate, procreation.

It is the driver's business to know these middle-class East End streets like the back of his hand. He himself lives as do most blue collars over West of the river. (Where his helper may reside Joe Naperalski has never once wondered. The man gets to work on time, somehow, certainly not in any car of his own.)

Joe is a good bit larger than most of us, second-generation Polish, and addicted to cigars. He is father of four so far, others to come. Three of these offspring are to perish early in World War *II*, and three for one family is more than expected at least in the New World. These losses finished off Janko Naperalski at age eighty-three in 1942. Joe's father had been a seminarian at Poznan when in 1875 Bismarck's Prussian *Kulturkampf* forbade them the Polish tongue. Cardinal Ledochowski defied the decree and left for Rome even as young Naperalski left for America. Here it seems he failed to resume his religious aspirations. The size of him helped in his life-long manual labors. But for all his inherited physical might, Joe too will fail rather when his sons so quickly go in our War against the ambition of Japan. His friends said something came over him then.

However, this is many years away. His vigorous services, as straightforward and assured as those of any Motor Sergeant Major, are duly valued in the Company and not unknown to old Sam Morman himself. This will be proven in hard times ahead when even during the darkest Depression years there will always be for Joe at least part-time work. His attendance is required the Sabbath by Mrs. Naperalski to St. Adelbert's and by his fellows to the Casimir the Great Social Club on Friday nights.

This afternoon, for all Joe's bodily mass and for all the good suspension of the vehicle he bobs up and down erect in the cab with his cigar. There is a washboard stretch or two even on Sherman Street. His fingers on the steering wheel tap as if to some melody, those mitts so huge—Lafayette said he never in his life saw bigger hands on a man than George Washington's. Joe's hands must be like them, doubtless coarser. Joe's features are of dimensions that might have excited a craniometrician could he have indexed the structures underlying the face.

In expression this face was responsive to the most fleeting emotion, as was his voice which tended to the emphatic far more than he himself dreamed. It was given to him all unwitting to fling his arms about for no apparent reason. Some people were alarmed by this appearance and manner, although as far as possible Joe was a man of peace.

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Beside him bounced Nat Williams, of brown round cheerful face, undisturbed even in sleep or as our clairvoyance can reveal on inevitable occurrences in the yards or truck lots around town. There some fools might offer after the custom of the day humorous remarks on his ancestry to Naperalski's darky. Within Naperalski's earshot none did it twice.

When time came for coffee during their long day on the streets, at some stops both men went in to sit up at the counter. More often, Joe would take Nat's coins and fetch out the coffee and pie. At counter or from fender both ate the pie as we eat pizza.

Should some Mick turn up as guest at the Social Club, Joe might burst into cheerful song, *DOES your Mither come from Poland, Has she eyes of Polish blue-hoo.* Never would it have crossed his mind that he was other than a big Polack born and bred in America. Under the sunny sky at Dick's corner where flourished the giant fountain-top elm, the truck turns, halts, reverses over the fallen leaves into the driveway alongside the coal bin. The long steel chute is unlimbered by Nat, one end extended into window, the other made fast at tail gate. Naperalski idles up the engine, Nat engages the lifting gear.

What if, why is nobody here to help, he will soil himself, soil the seat, his underwear too as once he did, everybody will see. But I can do it! Eyes clamped tight, rage squeezes his undressed body like a jungle boa constrictor. Then thunder of Heaven and Hell. The whole house shakes and rumbles, the toilet seat trembles and his bewildered loins. Boom boom boom—he has done it at last. Timbers and planks of the house tumble around his ears, roof and all, the flesh of the walls rips away, there lie Father, Sister, Dottie and yes Mother her bones the unjointed and half-bared framework. An instant's bomb-burst of nightmare and he has done it all. Oh poor spooky Poe, *The mighty walls rush asunder—a long tumultuous shouting sound—the deep and dank tarn at my feet closed sullenly and silently over the fragments of the HOUSE OF USHER.* And then there is only a last rattle rattle from the cellar. Silence sullenly closes, his eyes open. So that is all it was. He has not then in the immeasurable force of his evil murdered and demolished. Trembling, he does rather well at last what is necessary thank you.

Nat the helper tackles back the chute as the truck bed cranks itself down to rest. One long sudden avalanche has put the three tons away. He tosses in the empty gunny sacks. Turning, he spies on the front porch, just tall enough to peer over the railing, a pale-faced wide-eyed little boy, hair athatch, staring at the truck's nose.

"Lo theah Sonny."

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Around the truck comes the driver not actually stamping his feet but his face gave that impression as of a job well done and that's that. Various changes moved flexibly about the monumental plinth of the nose. He dismissed the cigar butt to the leaves and spat forcibly. He slapped together his moleskin gauntlets. He too saw the boy.

Dick goes down to him. This kind of day can leave a young fellow a bit wobbly in the knees.

The man pulled off his gloves and tossed them to the squared fender. When he chucks the boy up, earth, truck, trees awhirl, awheel, Dick feels again how Uncle Anders once long ago picked him up by a railroad train, an engine with its own bright wheels and rods. High up, Dick sees the windshield, the sloped green bonnet. It must have been the slanting sun was still strong between the houses, for the nickled little statue fairly glittered. A frog? No, a cubistic canine, rampant, spike-collared and bug-eyed, prognathously grinning into Dick's high-held face.

"That's Mack the Bull Dog."

Dick urged his throat to growl in the wonderful way the truck driver did. "Mack," he croaked. Even a child—no especially a child—can sense a man's power or lack of it. Naperalski's canvas coat sleeves and his ten fingers, the biggest Dick would ever see life-long, told him at once that this man would never let fall anything he had taken up least of all a small boy. So he soared. His now perfectly tranquil face passes the apparently ever-tranquil plump face of Nat. Dick's ear is at the driver's mouth.

"Mack don't never give up."

And then, that is all. The coal truck ponderously gets under way, chain and sprocket, Dick returns the wave from its tall shining cab, it tacks into the street. Dick stands at the porch spindles like any Admiral at his taffrail on the broad seas and takes his final salute from the air horn. So now we too may retire, some of you perhaps ascending from our so variously floating lookout levels to move on up to the high slopes of light where the immortal ones have their eternal dwellings, so men say, with never wind nor rain, no snow clouds stain those heavens, so calm, where the happy gods and goddesses live their endless days of pleasure. Or we go elsewhere, you that way, we this. Which is better we cannot tell.

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CYRILLE FLEISCHMAN

Fame and Fortune

Boris Tonski, the cantor at a little synagogue in the fourth arrondissement, got a booking at the Concert Pacra on Boulevard Beaumarchais under the name of Tony Rosib. Like that. On a whim. Because he had a beautiful voice.

When the president found out, all he said was: "Either you sing in a cabaret or you stay chazan in the shul! Choose."

Tonski had chosen.

He was a curtain raiser several times on Boulevard Beaumarchais, didn't impress anyone, and in a very few days became an unemployed singer.

At the synagogue they wouldn't even consider taking him back. He was replaced by the rabbi's nephew, and now came to services on Saturday merely as one of the faithful.

Soon Tonski quietly changed synagogues for the Sabbath service.

One winter day he vanished completely from the fourth arrondissement to try his luck in Canada.

In Toronto, Boris Tonski changed his name, anglicizing himself to become Boris Tony. He didn't have any luck with his new name either: in the night club that took him on, the boss thought he was Italian and he became something like Boristoni on the poster. For three days. On the fourth he lost his job. Then, by chance, at a charitable agency, he met the daughter of an important member of the community. And so it was that several months later, reassuming his name, Boris Tonski gave up singing in all its forms, religious and lay, to become the son-in-law of a wealthy importer.

Judy, his wife, was no trouble. She had a baby every two years, let him lead his new life as son-in-law blessed with good fortune, and gave him the royal peace that allowed Tonski to flourish in Canada. He worked in the family business, which he expanded to a moderate degree until the day Judy's father died. That gentleman had an only daughter, an only son-in-law, and Tonski, at less than forty, became—through the intermediary of his wife—a respected man. He was no longer obliged to expand anything at all except leisure time with his family. When they came to Europe for a few days of vacation, Boris and Judy Tonski didn't settle down under the sun in Paris but in Cap-Ferrat. Of course they had a better chance of finding the Mediterranean there than in the fourth arrondissement! But that was not the underlying reason: Boris had revenge in mind!

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The Concert Pacra where he'd sung without success was now closed and under reconstruction as another type of building on Boulevard Beaumarchais, and there was no hope of revenge in that quarter.

But there was still the little synagogue where they'd more or less pushed him out. All the members of the shul's board were still alive. A few years older and still in the same positions. This was confirmed by a private detective the day Tonski arrived in France.

The next morning, leaving his wife and children around the swimming pool at the hotel, Tonski had phoned the president. He explained what he had become, adding that he planned to make a substantial donation to the synagogue, and he asked that the board meet on the following Sunday morning so that he could make the announcement. The president had heard his share of stories. He ended the conversation with:

"If you want to come, come."

Tonski had laid out his success in detail, the vast business holdings he managed, his family, etc. The president had believed it all, but it left him cold.

In his little workshop, he had other things to worry about than Tonski. Until the following Friday he even forgot the telephone call. It was only after evening services that he informed the members of the board:

"You know what? That little chazan who used to chant here, he phoned me from somewhere or other. He became somebody in America and he's coming on Sunday morning at eleven o'clock. You remember Boris Tonski?"

The others nodded and the secretary asked: "What does he do? Is he a singer? In Hollywood? Under what name? My wife knows him maybe if he was in a movie they showed at the Saint Paul."

The president shrugged: "Not even. He told me he's in business over in Canada, he has children, a wife and. . ."

"So I have a wife and children too," the treasurer interrupted, "and I don't disturb people on Sunday morning, on a work day. Why doesn't he come tomorrow, like a normal person?"

The president shrugged: "Do I know?"

And he put on his coat to leave. In any case, it was his custom to arrive on Sunday around ten o'clock to go over papers with the board secretary. That week there had been water damage thanks to the neighbors living above the synagogue, and they had to discuss it. Whether or not the treasurer came didn't matter one whit. Whether or not Tonski stopped by was equally unimportant.

Sunday came.

The former chazan had rented a chauffeur-driven car the night before.

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He had left his family in their palace on the Riviera alleging important matters to settle in Paris and, as usual, his wife had said: "Yes, dear." Throughout the long journey, Tonski savored his triumphal return. He reached the Porte d'Italie at ten o'clock. At ten twenty the car was in the fourth arrondissement. Five minutes later, he walked into the little shul. Outside, in the street, the limousine with the chauffeur waited, double-parked like the car of a cabinet officer.

Inside, at that hour of the morning, there was no one but the president and the secretary, seated at a table at the far end of the room. They were deep in discussion and didn't raise their heads. Tonski coughed and moved forward. The secretary glanced up.

"Just a minute," he said.

He continued his dialogue with the president:

"*If* they say it's a pipe that burst in their place, their insurance pays. The problem is, those Hungarians aren't insured! I went up and they threw me out the door. Is that the way to do things?"

Stressing his point, he took Tonski to witness:

"In your opinion, you, straight out of America from what I hear, tell me, is that the way to do things, not to be insured against water damage in the twentieth century?"

Tonski was completely bewildered. He'd been traveling all night, thinking only of the words he would speak. And what were they talking about to him? What was the secretary talking about since the president hadn't even raised his head? They were telling him tales of uninsured neighbors. He coughed again and tried to come out with the Yiddish speech he'd prepared in his head:

"Dear friends..."

The president condescended to lift his head and interrupted him in French:

"Tonski, how are you? Sit down; at your age a person isn't likely to do any more growing."

He sat down.

The secretary handed him a plan of the synagogue:

"How, in your opinion, can a pipe that burst at the Hungarians upstairs leak down our wall?"

Tonski didn't have the slightest idea. He wasn't interested. He hadn't come from the Riviera and Canada to study a house plan on a Sunday morning.

He answered curtly in French:

"I head a business in Canada! I have ten companies with hundreds of employees. I am not in Paris to waste my time on construction work of inferior quality."

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The secretary shook his head, impressed. He pointed to the visitor:

"You ought to ask him," he said, addressing the president, "if they have problems with floors over there."

He explained to Tonski: "Here, whenever there are more than sixty people, there's good chance the floor'll collapse."

The president raised his head; now he was interested and pressed for an answer:

"Tonski, in Canada, do your shuls have good floors?"

"How would I know?" answered Tonski, impatiently.

"I'm asking, like that, to say something," the president went on. "Don't get angry. And how's life treating you?"

"All right! I wanted the board of this shul where I was a young chazan. . ."

He was about to launch into a speech; the president interrupted him to agree:

"Where you were a very young chazan. You remember? You even tried to play the fool in a theater. . ."

Annoyed, Tonski started over again:

"I wanted to say that, thank heaven, I've made a success and in memory of those days I am going to make a donation—a donation like nothing you'll ever get again! Look!"

He took out an envelope and threw it on the table.

Neither the secretary nor the president touched the envelope which remained right there among the building plans. The president sighed:

"Take all that back. You'll see about it later with the treasurer. He isn't here this morning. You can find him maybe in his shop next door. You know, the fish store where they sell herring, to your right as you leave. He's the one who gives out receipts."

Once more the president bent over the letters cluttering the table, grabbed hold of a bill and showed it to the secretary:

"Now we've got to figure out if we should pay the painter who painted the door, or if we answer that he can go get his bill paid by the cleaner who couldn't remove the spots on the rabbi's coat. Paint that never dries, is it paint or a declaration of war?"

Tonski tried to interrupt but the president didn't give him time. He raised his head again and said kindly but firmly:

"Go see the treasurer. It'll make him happy. Take a herring for your wife, that'll make her happy too. Excuse us, but we have *important* matters to settle here."

Tonski shook his head.

He had an urge to bang on the table, to scream, to howl. He had an enormous black limousine with a chauffeur waiting in the street, he was a

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man loved and respected everywhere else, his wife and children were waiting for him in the grandest palace on the Riviera, and here he was of no interest to anyone! He stood up, nervously took a few steps toward the spot where he used to chant ten years ago. The president and secretary weren't even looking at him any more. Tonski gripped the edges of the stand. Firmly! Desperately! For a few moments he swayed without saying a word, then began to sing. To himself at first, then louder, very loud. Since they couldn't care less about his money, his success, everything, he'd show them what a voice they had lost! And, indeed, it was magnificent. Anger increased the passion. Tonski's voice challenged heaven and earth.

The president and secretary interrupted their work to listen. When he finished, the president rose, came towards him and said only:

"Tonski, if you wouldn't have left here, you might have become a great chazan! Talent you have. . ."

Tonski took out his silk pocket handkerchief to wipe a drop of sweat from his cheek. He shook his head, not knowing what to answer. The president added:

"Talent you have, what's missing is patience."

He slapped him on the shoulder and went back to the little table with the papers. From there he tossed out a further opinion:

"To truly be 'somebody,' success is not enough! You need patience! This shul, you think it runs on genius? With people like Einstein, Rothschild, Chagall or George Ulmer? No, it runs on imbeciles like me, like the secretary, like the treasurer and his marinated herrings. It runs because we take care of bills, floors, receipts, water damage. . ."

And he added for himself and for the listening angels:

"Patience! Nothing but patience is what makes the world run."

Translated from the French by Avriel Goldberger

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CYRILLE FLEISCHMAN

Jazz

It was in 1954. Maybe 1955. Maybe even 1956. And he, a Hebrew teacher and trumpet player, had a mistress.

What's so terrible? said the kindly disposed. A Hebrew teacher can't play the trumpet?

Yes! said the ill-disposed, but a mistress? For a Hebrew teacher, is that right?

The students' parents, the administration, the congregation of the synagogue and the president spent their time wondering.

Izzyk Gilleski's view of life was simple. Sunday evenings, through his beard, he played trumpet with a New Orleans style group. Sunday mornings he taught classes on the Talmud, with modern Hebrew thrown in, at the little school next to the synagogue. But there was the problem of the mistress.

Still, mistress was a big word. His wife had used it first at the butcher's.

She had said ruefully: "My husband doesn't only play the trumpet, I think he has a mistress."

The butcher's wife had no illusions. "Madame Gilleskie, *they all* have mistresses! You shouldn't let your husband play music at night, any time men go out at night, they have a mistress."

"I said it just like that. I don't know for sure. But I wonder."

"Don't wonder any more: start crying right now! *My* husband doesn't play any instrument, but he had a mistress *too* last winter. Every Monday evening he went card-playing with his friends."

"And how did you get him over it?"

"Hit him. It's the only way. At his age, you don't really think I'd take him to a psychiatrist? I beat him up good and hard, and since then he doesn't have any mistress and he doesn't play any poker. Just rummy on Sundays, with me there to watch."

"I am not going to beat up the father of my children! Never mind. I'll put up with the mistress and I'll kill him."

"Even so, beat him up a little first! Men aren't as bad as they seem. Don't commit a crime of passion just over a mistress. . ."

It went on for several months. The only thing people talked about anymore was Suzanne Gilleskie's tragedy and that damnable trumpet. Then July came around. The month the president always went to Juan-les-Pins.

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Also the month for Izzyk's group to play at a jazz festival between Monaco and Cannes, as confirmed by the invitation sent to the Gilleski home. A little festival in a little resort. But with a fee, and that was no small event! Izzyk went straight to the president. He knew his musical activities were not appreciated, but this was the chance of a lifetime. Besides, he could perfectly well eat kosher and go to services on the Riviera, a coast that was not inhospitable. The president was flattered that an ordinary teacher from his little school should be invited to a festival. He would have preferred a Hebrew grammar festival! But okay for a jazz festival. After all, it was a gift from heaven. Still, there was the mistress Suzanne Gilleski had mentioned to the butcher's wife one day. The president took Izzyk by the shoulders and looked him squarely in the eyes:

"It appears that, they say that..."

Izzyk helped him out: "It's not true."

"Nevertheless, everybody says. . ."

"Do I even have time to listen to what everybody says? There's nothing to it. Believe me, it's nothing. Suzanne's imagining things."

"And you? You're sure you're not imagining things? Things that aren't so nice? Be frank with me."

"There's nothing. It's all baloney. I play jazz. Suzanne can't stand me going out at night, that's all there is. You're leaving for vacation when? July 13th? I leave with you. I stay for three days. I go to the festival. I come back. You keep your eye on me. I can't do any better."

The president scratched his head: "Invite you to my hotel room, I can. Food: no problem there. But go every night with you in the bus to keep an eye on you while you play? I'm wondering. First of all, what kind of music do you play? Jazz here, jazz there, I'm not clear on it. You play. . .tangos in jazz? Waltzes?"

"No it's in a class by itself, faster."

"Rhumbas. At my daughter's wedding, when my poor wife was still alive. . ."

"No, Monsieur Guitterman, jazz, I can't explain, for me it's life."

They went on talking for a long time. Guitterman went home with Izzyk to ask Suzanne Gilleski if she was willing to stop all the talk about a mistress that was upsetting the neighborhood. He would invite Izzyk to his hotel in Juan-les-Pins to allow him to go to the festival and he would look after him.

The president was already seventy-six years old; he carried authority, and Suzanne Gilleski agreed to pack her husband's suitcase so he could be at the Gare de Lyon on the evening of July 13.

She went to the Saint Paul metro with him and for the two stops it took to reach the railroad station she made sure that no woman was fol-

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lowing him. She inspected the departure of the train and, reassured, took the metro home. Izzyk was leaving with the president, he was in good hands.

The first day on the Riviera went by without incident. The little hotel where Guitterman regularly stayed was comfortable. You could bring in your food. Even though you could find restaurants that were more or less kosher, it was better not to take useless risks. Besides, he liked to nibble in his room and not get his stomach loaded with heavy food. That's what he was telling Izzyk, who was on his first trip to the Riviera and wouldn't have minded lunch at a restaurant. So the two of them, settled down in the room, ate toast rounds and yoghurt, the one delighted, the other disappointed.

The president decided that given the circumstances, they could dispense with afternoon prayers and take the bus to the little station about ten kilometers away where the festival was going on. So Guitterman, the trumpet, and Gilleski took their seats on the bus.

"What time are you expected?"

"The first time we go on is from seven to eight, then from ten to eleven."

"And in the meantime what do *I* do?"

"Monsieur Guitterman, thanks for coming with me. You're not going to stay late at night. Go back to bed whenever you want. I'll go back to the hotel by myself."

"Gilleski, do you really mean that? Your wife entrusted you to me. Even if I have to stand all night, I'm staying!"

Gilleski introduced the president to the other musicians and, because he was a little ashamed, he whispered in the leader's ear: "He's an old cousin of my father's. I brought him along because he was bored at the hotel where he's spending his vacation."

They couldn't have cared less about why Guitterman was there, and he was settled on a folding chair beside the platform, along with the leader's wife, the pianist's girlfriend, and the drummer's younger son. Guitterman took a reprint of the Book of Prophets out of his pocket and became completely engrossed in the passages he loved. He also had a Nice newspaper he'd bought at the station. Seated on his folding chair, he smiled at everyone and gave Gilleski permission to go up on the stage.

The warm breeze felt good, and you could hear the echo of several groups on other platforms. Guitterman wasn't embarrassed about reading. He raised his head when the leader's wife offered him a little coffee she was pouring from a thermos. He smiled and refused politely at first:

"My health, my liver, my heart. I can't eat a thing away from home."

He would have loved a cup of coffee, but he was strictly kosher, and usually he didn't eat at all unless he was sure of the people who invited

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him. But it was a nice day, and he was having an adventure. He got up from his folding chair and took a few steps toward the leader's wife.

"Madame, all the same I'll take a cup of coffee for the honor of drinking with you."

He cleared his throat, adding a little anxiously:

"You. . .you. . .don't ever put any. . .ham in your coffee, do you? My doctor doesn't allow it."

As she poured coffee into a paper cup, the leader's wife said:

"Oh no." Then, disturbed: "I don't think so. Does your wife usually put ham in her coffee?"

Guitterman almost choked. What kind of a fix did I get myself into with this coffee? He thought for a moment, and smiling broadly so he wouldn't lose face: "No, Madame, my wife doesn't put ham in the coffee because I'm. . .a widower!"

"Oh, excuse me!"

He went back to his folding chair. On the platform, the other musicians had joined Izzyk Gilleski.

Guitterman was at the foot of the platform. He put down the newspaper he'd taken out of his pocket when he finished his coffee, got up from his chair and made up his mind to listen closely.

He was surprised. It was louder than he'd ever heard. Louder than the band of the Garde Républicaine in the Place des Vosges, when there was still a bandstand in the Place des Vosges.

The president made every effort to follow that strange rhythm. The whole world vibrated around him. There weren't only young people there. Guitterman was the oldest at the foot of the platform, but there were people of forty, fifty, the age of his own children.

Automatically, without realizing it, he began to beat time with his right foot. Within half an hour, just as at the circus of his childhood when the trapeze artists threw themselves into the void and were caught at the last moment, he followed the music, lost it, and found it again.

Guitterman was in a little circus, he was in a painting, he was somewhere else.

He beat time, his own time. Forgotten was his mission to look after Izzyk; forgotten, his worries, the whole world ouside of this music that was not music but something else. A sentence came back to him. Gilleski had said something like:

"It's better than music, it's life!"

Guitterman closed his eyes and, beyond what his arthritis would allow, he gave himself up to that life.

Translated from the French by Avriel Goldberger

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WISLAWA SZYMBORSKA

A Contribution to Statistics

Out of a hundred people

those who always know better
—fifty-two,

doubting every step
—nearly all the rest,

glad to lend a hand
if it doesn't take too long
—as high as forty-nine,

always good
because they can't be otherwise
—four, well maybe five,

able to admire without envy
—eighteen,

suffering illusions
induced by fleeting youth
—sixty, give or take a few,

not to be taken lightly
—forty and four,

living in constant fear
of someone or something
—seventy-seven,

capable of happiness
—twenty-something tops,

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harmless singly,
savage in crowds
—half at least,

cruel
when forced by circumstances
—better not to know
even ballpark figures,

wise after the fact
—just a couple more
than wise before it,

taking only things from life
—thirty
(I wish I were wrong),

hunched in pain,
no flashlight in the dark
—eighty-three
sooner or later,

righteous
—thirty-five, which is a lot,

righteous
and understanding
—three,

worthy of compassion
—ninety-nine,

mortal
—a hundred out of a hundred.
Thus far this figure still remains unchanged.

Translated from the Polish by Stanislaw Baranczak and Clare Cavanagh

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DAHLIA RAVIKOVITCH

Grand Days Have Gone By Her

How did it go?
Untypically, she was quick to recollect.
A vineyard didn't spring from the earth.
An orchard stood there,
sickly,
slow to blossom.
A walnut tree that bloomed failed to ripen.
As though some natural yielding element
were missing from the ground.
Hard green lemons.
A balding lawn.
A great calm.
In the west, the hedge grew wild
and naturally the honeysucker
(later named honeybird),
were it alive today,
would have been twenty already.

There were manhunts in the valley.
Fire in the brush.
The summer burnt as usual in a hellish blaze,
the evening cast shadows with no relief.
Between death and death
they sang to her
the songs of Zion.
She wouldn't go to bed before dawn,
before a bird twittered.
In those years
she herself died
three or four times.
Not a definitive final death,
but a sort of death throes.
Great yearnings gripped her
in the bosom of night,
mighty emotional throbs.

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The years have their way of wreaking changes
hidden and secret.
It is simple for her to remember this.
Grand days have gone by her.
What a pity that now, so near the end,
she's suddenly lost the ability
to remain among the living.

Translated from the Hebrew by Tsipi Keller

SAMUEL MENASHE

In the Ring

Knock yourself out
Shadow boxing—
Skull numb, mouth dry—
Blind the mind's eye

"Can these bones live?"
Ezekiel 37,3

Sockets eyes hallowed
In hollow skulls
Whose teeth jaws lock
At rock bottom—
Bones flesh fails
Scale the rock

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W. S. Di PIERO

Some Voice

Past the silky gondola hulls
arcaded in the boatyard,
we walked that afternoon
to our favorite grubby campo,
empty except for cats
and one plane tree, with bench.

We loved it so much. We walked
just to be there, imagining
sometime we'd spend the night.
The little hotel, its frank lantern,
its dim sign dimmer by day,
we'd remember, just like that.

The tree's patchy shades worked
down your arm as it pointed up,
over there, locating the voice,
its open window, the soprano scales
tipped down to us. All life
is hidden life. Don't believe
everything you hear. To us,
or not to us, her voice fell
into that year, then ten more.

Routine practice doesn't call
to anyone, it simply falls
through footbridges, black hulls,
and plane tree. I never felt
I had to look for subject matter.
I take what's given, I work
with that. The rest is grace.
This all happened twenty years ago.

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PETER DAVISON

Seaside Summer Quarry

While a waterlily shivers and
shrugs its shadow across
a green platter of leaf,

two water striders caper across
their liquid runway to mount
the next lilypad,

surmounting a dark-brown tea-steeped
dangerous depth
of water.

Bared granite rocks,
sentried by sabres of iris,
jut up

from soft starry beds of
emerald moss, their harsh hide
scarified with gray

and green lichens. The dull leaves
of past seasons lie low
in crevices. From the high sky

gold strands of sunlight thread
through the hemlocks.
Over my shoulder, fishboat diesels

thrum their dark discord
against the snarl of a
small plane, while,

flap! and crack! in a freshening
breeze, sloop-sails
make good their getaway.

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Rapt here in the quarry, under a wide
straw hat, you
sit still and with a pen

not yet quite released
into perfect freedom,
endeavor to fix

upon your sheet of paper
the same stolen abstractions
I have just lost
from mine.

CHRISTOPHER MIDDLETON

Aladağ Mountain Sketches

1

The old Turk joined his two sheep near sundown,
Sat on a tree root, spoke now and then:
Tukurruk tukurruk. The sheep spoke back,
Not as sheep to sheep but *tukurruk tukurruk*,
The right way for a sheep to speak to a man.

2

All day since dawn in the blazing sun
And hauling what he has to haul,
Logs and apricots, hay and men,
Serene when he drinks, happy trotting,
The donkey brays a bit near nightfall.
When he brays, hold on to your hat,
His heaven is near, might sweep you in.

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3

There was this bird suddenly with a trill
Delineating all the apple trees,
A trill like a whisker, the whisker bird;
And after this, the high call of the muezzin,
More whisker; the tractor, whisker; the apples,
Orchard whiskers, globular and green.

4

The wrinkled cloven features of the rock
Outcrops hereabouts, and this granny's:
Tenderly she gestured beside her—
On the road shoulder, at last gasp, her sheep.
But it can't die in the trunk like a hostage,
Can it? So we drove on, but granny
Who tutored sheep through misty generations,
From lamb's first leap to milking, to wool,
Each a silken pocket, full of foibles,
We left her looking back down the empty road.

5

"Life is hard, still harder when you're dumb"—
But they aren't, in one-room stone and plaster
Huts, the graceful girls, headscarf knotted right,
In clean clothes, the mother with a scalded foot,
Taking the pain. They all sweat it out, him too,
Dawn to dusk, among the white beans, baba,
Granite face, who talks a streak.

6

Where from, the slender fingers?
With a carving knife she hacks
The block of snow somebody carried
Down the mountain. Just look,
How the slender fingers dip a piece
In the mound of sugar and establish it
Between tongue and teeth. In the town,
Wintertime. . .but it's far off.
Up here, we make do with snow cream.

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7

Stone on stone, four walls rose
And a cupola was rounded;
A low portal pierced one wall,
So you stoop to go on in. The spring,
Five outlets in a wide
Arc (cold star), whence gushes
Crystal water still,
They housed it in a shrine, you see

Here the huge root spread:
A willow hit by lightning, long
Before we came. Before the roof caved in,
Trees all around,

Their graves in the rock, under a green hood
They heard willow speak to water,
And housed the spring, so it could dwell
In itself, as such a place might wish to.
Yes, dwell in itself.
Yes, them, not us.

KRISTIN FOGDALL

Aristotle's Lantern

Under tidal drift,
lather spreading over shingle,
creatures siphon into darkness,
world of scavenge.

Not for squeamish, this
preying done with radulas and
beaks and sac-like stomachs probing,
always out of sight.

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Haunted by the depths
but afraid of mystery, we
classify unspeakables with
household objects,

nursery rhymes. A limpet
has a *keyhole; feather dusters,*
sponges suck the bottom clean.
Sea peach, olives,

lettuce slugs: a grocer
stocks his coral shelves. Freak shows
slowly circle east: the *hairy*
doris, warty

sea-cat, common baby's
ear all turn a tawdry living.
Deeper, tonguing under-rocks, the
lunar dove snail

creeps a gold and
purple *jewel box,* regardless
of what moon he's named for, or any
thing but murk.

C. DALE YOUNG

The Endless Cumulus

My soul is an enchanted Boat
Which, like a sleeping swan, doth float
—Shelley

Red like the heart of a calcium flame,
the sun flickers at the horizon,

the sails of a clipper blown taut.
Sav-la-Mar: Shelley wanders the beach,

the sand flushed with twilight,
his skin bronzed, his hair blanched.

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After a century of crepuscular skies,
boldly inflexible iguanas

with tongues the color of ginger lilies,
ospreys off course, young boys

fighting the surf red with seaweed,
cane fields uproarious in flames,

nights sticky with the scent of molasses—
again the dream he cannot help but dream:

the endless cumulus of the currents,
the ocean suddenly thickening,

the sun caught in the air rising from his lips.

JAY ROGOFF

The Vessel

It's hard to conceive; I'm conducting research:
the top candidates are cosmic light rays,
some word raking hell through the universe,
a magic seed, or, in the joke a drunk French
priest once told me, "C'était le pigeon, Joseph."
Picture it in a flask, like the old Pyrex
stomach where Rolaids used to neutralize
our belly's sins. It's not the purest image,
this cockeyed gnostic gynecology.
Still, her carriage in that heavy crown and dress,
the oceanic patience in her face,
and the calm finger that holds off for later
her book's climax, which she knows she'll get to,
confide her love can bear the world and me.

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DECIMUS MAGNUS AUSONIUS

IV Attius Patera [Pater], Rhetorician

You, sir, had reached your prime, when I was a baby;
as a very young man, I remember
you were an ancient, venerable, surviving
to great age from another
and better age. You were my teachers' teacher,
of whom they all still boasted.
They said you had come of a long line of Druids,
priests of their god Belenus.
Apollo was thus your patron, guide, and protector.
From him you had your name,
"Patera," the sobriquet of Phoebus' priests.
Your father Phoebicius, your brother
of the same name, and your son Delphidius all
bore that deity's blazon
from whom you had your gifts, eloquence, style,
concision, mellifluousness
your friends and colleagues envied. Your wit was gentle,
your memory, always impressive,
and your learning, vast. Abstemious, modest, precise,
you were a rare bird—
an old eagle, still strong, still sharp of eye,
and still gracefully soaring.

Translated from the Latin by David R. Slavitt

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RACHEL HADAS

The Peacock in the Garden

When the peacock turned
his elegantly coroneted head
to fix me with his gleaming little eye
in order to measure the distance from the patch
of sunwarmed wall that was his lonely perch
to my shoulder where I sat on a sunwarmed bench,

I imagined the thump of a landing, the unwieldy weight,
the pecking beak and tearing talons. But
none of this ruffled my tranquillity.
Bench and wall and weeping willow tree
wove such a stillness that my reverie
in the peacock's eye achieved assent,
I found in him so much of what I sought.

My silent dead looked out at me from him.
Oceans were coded on his brilliant back;
a deep green forest and a galaxy
were doubly folded in the starry tail
which he would stand and presently unfurl
once he made his mind up to jump down
(not onto me—I'd moved aside a little)
from where he roosted on the sunwarmed wall.

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JENNIFER BARBER

In the Bosch Room, Downstairs at the Prado

The days are numbered,
something has to give,
torso or crotch or spindly
trees, and lizards on the bank.

A woman whose nakedness
is seen by giant starlings, whose tears
gouge pools in solid rock until
she too must enter in,
her curtain of hair falling
down her slender back in waves.

Bell-makers, organ builders,
prurient owls, wimpled pigs
all waiting for something
to damn them or release them
from the pale sunlight
which seals their sentences.

Even I, who don't believe
in the pinkish flames
always just out of sight
can't take the name
Hieronymous in vain, he has
foreseen my standing here
in my dark clothes and dubious century.

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JAMES LAUGHLIN

The Life of Words

When he was young he read many books,
he devoured them. Later he tried to be a
writer. But he discovered that words
have a life of their own, often not
saying what he wanted them to say.

The First Night

we spent together was like
school. Each was trying to
teach the other what we
liked or did not like. Love
was becoming a real thing.

A Moment of Vanity

A moment of happy vanity came to me in Urbino,
The seat of the one-eyed condottiere Duke "Feddy,"
who gathered so many artists and scholars at his
court. I was dickering for a book and the seller
told me, "Lei si difende bene in Italiano." ⋆

⋆*"You defend yourself well in Italian."*

The Magic Flute

That summer in Munich we were Papageno and Papagena.
We walked along the Isar and in the Englische Garten
and went to a different opera almost every night. But
it was Mozart who set us dreaming and made us fall
in love. Beautiful days and now happy memories.

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MILLICENT BELL

Fiction Chronicle

UNDERWORLD. By Don DeLillo. Scribner. $27.50
TOWARD THE END OF TIME. By John Updike. Knopf. $25.00
THE WITCH OF EXMOOR. By Margaret Drabble. Harcourt Brace. $23.00
THE HOUSE GUN. By Nadine Gordimer. Farrar, Straus and Giroux. $24.00

As Roland Barthes pointed out, the hallmark of realism is the irrelevant detail—the description, the character, the incident that is there simply because we can believe in it. But it is also true that novelists are driven by paranoid obsession, compelled to find linking meanings and patterns of significance, to connect, connect. In *Ulysses,* Joyce's novel to end all realist novels, a profuse mundane contingency is strapped and laced into formal connectedness by arbitrary recurrences and schemes of reference—a holism in which he could not have seriously believed. What else but a mockery of continuity and relation is the piece of soap which travels from one to another episode during Bloomsday, appearing and reappearing like a mystic sign? In Don DeLillo's *Underworld,* the traveling object is a baseball. Struck into the bleachers for a three-run homer in the ninth inning, it copped the pennant for the New York Giants playing the Brooklyn Dodgers on October 3, 1951. The ball, a commemorative object, a precious souvenir, a supreme collectable, journeys on its way like the overcoat in Gogol's famous story. Through a span of fifty years in this vast multiplex novel about America the ball is passed from one disconnected DeLillo character to another. Russ Hodges, the radio announcer, thinks of the spot where the ball disappeared into the crowd in the stands as something like Appomatox, "another kind of history. . .they will carry something out of here that joins them all in a rare way, that binds them to a memory with protective power."

The accident of simultaneity links events just as arbitrarily, the novelist seems to believe. The front page of the *New York Times* gave equal three-column headlines to Bobby Thomson's whammo at the Polo Grounds and the first news of the Soviet atom bomb test, the beginning of the cold war. DeLillo, looking into his microfilm viewer, was fascinated: "A pair of mated headlines. . . .What did I see in this juxtaposition? Two kinds of conflict, certainly, but something else, maybe many things—I could not have said at the time." In the novel he imagines that J. Edgar Hoover, actu-

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ally present at the game, learned about the atom test even as he sat in Durocher's private box near the Giants' dugout in unlikely companionship with three other representatives of the culture of the moment—Toots Shor, Jackie Gleason, and Frank Sinatra. As the game progresses, the fans rain torn-up scorecards and crushed paper cups down on the field, and from an upper deck seat a man throws pages of the current *Life*. With their feature stories and the ads for a mounting fifties consumerism they drift onto the privileged quartet. "Baby food, instant coffee, encyclopedias, and cars, waffle irons and shampoos and blended whiskies. . .Johnson & Johnson and Quaker State and RCA Victor and Burlington Mills and Bristol-Myers and General Motors." Gleason, whose grainy comic epic of working-class life, "The Honeymooners," will begin its run two days later, notes "how the dazzle of a Packard car is repeated in the feature story about the art treasures of the Prado. It is all part of the same thing. Rubens and Titian and Playtex and Motorola." A page with a reproduction of Breugel's "Triumph of Death" flutters onto Hoover's shoulder like a portent of atomic end-of-the-world: "Death himself astride a slat-ribbed hack, he is peaked for blood, his scythe held ready as he presses people in haunted swarms towards the entrance of some helltrap, an oddly modern construction that could be a subway tunnel or office corridor. A background of ash skies and burning ships." Hoover thinks of the distant explosion of unknown destructive power and reflects, "What is the connection between Us and Them, how many bundled links do we find in the neural labyrinth? It's not enough to hate your enemy. You have to understand how the two of you bring each other to deep completion." Or, as a Hoover henchman will be told in 1966 by a demonstrator invading Truman Capote's famous Black and White Waldorf ball,

> We can look around us and see the business executives, the fashion photographers, the government officials, the industrialists, the writers, the bankers, the academics, the pig-faced aristocrats in exile, and we can know the soul of one by the bitter wrinkled body of the other and then know all by the soul of one. Because they are all part of the same motherfucking thing.

Deep completion, the unity of the same motherfucking thing, is what the novel strains for. But it is haunted by a dominating image—waste, garbage, the formlessly massed, infinitely heterogeneous, no longer differentiated leavings of history which we strive to compact and bury if we cannot "convert" it to new use—some of it, like nuclear waste, bound to

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permanently infect the future. The book's hero, Nick Shay, is a professional "waste manager"; representing the author's own experience and consciousness more closely than any other character he seems to express the artist's own struggle to subdue, understand, and, so, "dispose of" the past. A vision of the task comes to Nick as he contemplates the Everest of waste sites at Fresh Kills on Staten Island:

> He looked at all that soaring garbage and knew for the first time what his job was all about. Not engineering or transportation or source reduction. He dealt in human behavior, people's habits and impulses, their uncontrollable needs and innocent wishes, maybe their passions, certainly their excesses and indulgences but their kindness too, their generosity, and the question was how to keep this mass metabolism from overwhelming us.

One Jesse Detweiler, who had been a "garbage guerrilla" arrested during the sixties for snatching Hoover's personal garbage, has, in the nineties, become an archaeologist and philosopher of waste:

> Civilization did not rise and flourish as men hammered out hunting scenes on bronze gates and whispered philosophy under the stars, with garbage as a noisome offshoot, swept away and forgotten. We had to find ways to discard our waste, to use what we couldn't discard, to reprocess what we couldn't use. Garbage pushed back. It mounted and spread. And it forced us to develop the logic and rigor that would lead to systematic investigations of reality, to science, art, music, mathematics.

Underworld's inclusiveness is heroic, encompassing in detail and prolific narrative invention whole lives—like that of Nick, who resembles the author as a child of the postwar Bronx streets, or Klara Sax, born in the same world and later a famous artist who makes constructions out of worn-out war planes. There are others generated by the same time and place—Nick's brother Matt, a chess genius who becomes a weapons research specialist, Sister Edgar, who taught them all in grade school and now works to aid the inhabitants of the burnt-over neighborhood, Bronzini, the High School physics teacher, and numerous others. But scooped into the book's fill also are Brian Glassic, Nick's coworker at Waste Containment, Nick's wife Marian, and many minor characters with

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whom he intersects. There are those whose lives never or hardly touch his. Linked only by the drifting baseball after its first rebound from Bobby Thomson's bat are Manx Martin, the Harlem grifter whose son grabbed hold of the ball that historic day and whose daughter grows up to take part in the antisegregation struggle in the South. There is Marvin Lundy, the dealer in baseball memorabilia who traces the ball, and Charles Wainwright, an advertising account supervisor who buys it from Manx and gives it to his son. That son becomes a Vietnam pilot; his plane's fuselage, decorated by a female figure called Long Tall Sally, eventually goes into one of Klara's constructions. And quite unattached even by this whimsical relation is Ismael Munoz, the graffiti artist who spraypaints blue and pink angels as memorials of destroyed children, onto a Bronx wall. Just when the Russians put a satellite in orbit in 1957, a housewife makes Jell-O Chicken Mousse in her middle-America kitchen while her husband simonizes his car and her son masturbates peacefully in his room in front of a picture of Jayne Mansfield. And the Texas Highway Killer, a supermarket clerk, commits a random murder captured on video by a camera pointed idly by a child through a car rear window. Touching none of these directly but significant for all is the historic Hoover, the obsessed and repressed master figure whose never-released sexual energy is like the menace of the cold war itself. He seems the spokesman for the era's paranoia and, at the same time, for the artist's search for an elusive coherence. An equally striking reincarnation is Lenny Bruce with his manic monologues, subversive and corrosive. He screams out what America hears behind the headlines of the Cuban missile crisis: "We're all gonna die!"

Continuous plot, in the ordinary sense, does not exist for DeLillo in this book. As though making fun of the literary idea of a puzzle to be unraveled on the last page, he teases us by letting us know early that Nick committed a murder when he was seventeen, a murder for which he was imprisoned as a juvenile before being released to a Jesuit school where a teacher instructed him in the importance not of wholes but of particulars—that one must know the names for all the parts of anything, as one might know technical names for all the parts of a shoe. Almost to the end, the novelist lets the reader wonder whom Nick killed, and how, and why. But when this primal scene is called up at last it turns out to be non-significant—a kid's game with a gun he was told was unloaded. As unmeaningful, probably, is his boyhood seduction by—or of—Klara. We understand from the beginning that they once were lovers, but only at the last is the affair given on-the-page life, and by then it is clear that it failed to provide the conventional motif of long-enduring love. For DeLillo is really not interested in such story-telling. The only history he tells is that which governs all lives.

Yet calendar time itself is deliberately flouted by a ferocious shredding of the narrative or narratives. The novel is divided into several hundred

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segments loosely bundled into six parts, but the order of these parts is scrambled as is the order of the segments within them. The prologue offers a bravura description of the famous game at the Polo Grounds in 1951, but immediately we land in the present, after that descending back perhaps a decade, then picking up bits from various stories—if we can call them that—spanning from 1980 to the early nineties, than gathering pieces from the Spring of 1978, and next reaching back to 1974. The fifth part is titled, "Selected fragments public and private in the 1950's and 1960's." The small vignettes that compose the 150-odd pages composing it are dated but disordered fragments. In the sixth part, the snake bites its tail when Nick recounts his visit to the forty-year-old Russian missile test site. His home life today in Phoenix, Arizona subsists in a routinized timelessness in which one dutifully sorts the household garbage—glass, cans, newspaper—for salvage. Passion, too, is contained; Marian's adulterous fling with Brian is over. Yet Nick says, "I long, for the days of disorders. . .the breach of peace, the days of disarray when I walked real streets and did things slap-bang and felt angry and ready all the time, a danger to others and a distant mystery to myself." And we return, in this final section, to the Bronx of his youth when he had run with gangs, made love to his teacher's wife, killed a man—and none of it had necessarily "meant."

Underworld is no easy read; the reader's unquenchable thirst for stories that have beginnings, middles, and ends compels a constant struggle to accumulate and put in order the streaming particles—an athletic effort for which classic modernist texts by Conrad, Ford Madox Ford, Virginia Woolf, and Faulkner have given one practice. As with the books by these writers the process may disorient the reader, suggest the triumph of accident and chaos in the place of cause and effect—or else discover unforeseen connections between things. It is as though the novel's design is an expression of its chief metaphor—life reduced to rubble for which a mode of salvage is sought.

It is a book that need not ever end, since its quest for order seems ironic. But DeLillo seems dissatisfied by his own commitment to the "intractability of waste"—and insists on a closure that I find banal and unconvincing. He seems to want, after all, to put a cap on it all, or to recycle his mountainous accumulation, successfully, safely. Near the final page the image of a raped and murdered Bronx girl appears on a billboard sign for orange juice, and Sister Edgar dies believing in a miracle. Transfigured in cyberspace, this bride of Christ is "exposed to every connection you can make on the World Wide Web." On the H Bomb home page the color monitor calls up thermonuclear bomb explosions of two decades, all the data. She "feels the power of false faith, the faith of paranoia" and finds herself joined with Hoover, "the Law's debased

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saint. . .Everything is connected in the end." But is it? When the word "peace" appears finally on the computer screen, the novelist sees fit to stop.

For all its existentialism and its radical form, DeLillo's big book exhibits more strenuously than any other in the train of this review the novel's traditional ambition to link the individual and accidental to some larger system. John Updike, our most prolific and exact observer of American mundanity, conceives a revelatory future in *Toward the End of Time*. This, his eighteenth novel, is a much smaller—in all senses—undertaking than DeLillo's and lacks the energy of Updike's own better works. Yet it, too, engages, though half-heartedly, to relate man to the culture of mankind. Its hero, discovered in the imminent future of the year 2020, is still one of us, a survivor of our own age. Everything has changed but perhaps is still the same. An extra, man-made moon lights up the night sky along with the old one, and something still more remarkable, a "torus," a miraculous presence in the form of a great ring of light, visits from another world. On earth, the U.S. has lost a nuclear war with China, our central government has collapsed, and social order is maintained by rogue organizations of bandits turned police and eventually operating within the appropriately named Fed Ex service. Yet the *Times* and the *Globe* are delivered at the door and the shopping malls draw their throngs, the work of the world goes on everywhere as well as in the State Street investment firm from which Ben Turnbull has retired, the power struggles of couples persist in and outside the bedroom in a way readers of earlier Updike novels will recognize. Ben, at sixty-six (almost exactly the age of his creator), is the representative of the aging of a society—ours—with no hope of renewal. He has a comfy house on eleven acres of pretty land on the North Shore and should have nothing to complain of except, as Hamlet says of old men, that he has weak hams. He putters about the place, now and then plays golf or goes on skiing weekends with aging buddies, sometimes is visited by grown children with whom he has no vital connection, and is locked in a silent struggle to the death with his ever-loving wife.

This competent caretaker—of the house, of the grounds, of her husband—is perhaps the most repellent female figure Updike has ever depicted, and she reminds me a little of the wives in the misogynist novels of John P. Marquand. Ben and his Gloria are at odds in all ways, but the only declared issue between them is a deer who has been nibbling the borders in her garden. She expects him to shoot it; he is less than a man because he is reluctant to do so; the deer, a doe, wins his heart with her soft brown gaze. From Gloria the look he receives—and returns—is of a different kind: "Which of us will die first? We look each other over every day, appraising the odds." His body constantly reminds him that he is losing ground, and before the year he is record-

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ing is over he discovers that he has prostate cancer, and he submits to an operation that robs him of sexual potency, once his chief joy. Humiliatingly incontinent, he carries under his clothes a sloshing bag that collects his own urine from his helpless bladder. And Gloria has an affair with the professional she has hired to kill the deer.

Towards the End of Time is not, though, a straightforward realist novel, however much it projects the endpoint of a certain variety of middle-class American life. We are in the hands of a wily writer who, though a famously exact recorder of our times, a master of recognizable specificities, has also written works of the free imagination like *The Centaur* (1963) and *The Witches of Eastwick* (1984). This time Updike has chosen to merge dreams and actuality, leaving them queerly indistinguishable. Sliced intrusively into the narrative and not obviously connected with it are what seem like intended "parallel lives" out of past human history or even earlier transmigrations of Ben's present history—the experiences of some ancient Egyptian grave robbers, of the author of Mark's Gospel, of a ninth-century Irish monk killed by invading Norsemen, of a Nazi camp guard who brutalizes a Jew. From time to time his familiar New England scene is replaced—it is not clear with what significance—by a landscape covered with a vast fungus growth, and even in the woods that seem otherwise unchanged he already comes upon a self-reproducing metallic life-form. At an early point, Gloria simply disappears (gone on a trip, murdered by Ben?). Without apology, the deer nibbling the euonymus "becomes a young lean-bodied whore, whom I invite into the house."

Yet Ben's relationship with the metamorphosed Deirdre is at least as visible on the page as his married life has been—more so, since it contains more opportunities for Updike's well-known exact description, comic and dispiriting at once, of the copulative process. There is nothing really left for Ben to care about, it seems, besides having sex in a few well-tried ways, and Deirdre is gratifyingly competent. She has quite ceased to be a supernatural visitor; she is a young hooker who steals Gloria's sterling centerpiece and Tabriz carpet and is as tough as sexist Turnbull when he remarks, "One advantage of the collapse of civilization is that the quality of young women who are becoming whores has gone way up. No more raddled psychotics or puffy, dazed coke addicts for the discriminating consumer. Twenty-year-olds who would once have become beauticians or editorial assistants, nurses or paralegals, have brought efficiency and comeliness to the trade."

Deirdre disappears from the story as suddenly and mysteriously as she arrived and Gloria is back ("I had not shot her, or if I had it was in another, slightly different universe"). But we continue to hear about Ben's quondam mistress who appears to have found new friends. She is known to

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the band of adolescent squatters—vaguely Afro-American-Latino—who have been squatting on his land and seem to be part of the new criminal authority to whom he pays "protection" money. Ben's relation with them becomes ambiguously compliant. He enters into their mischief and encourages them to burn down (for evasion of "tax") a neighbor's beach house which has long obstructed his view. He is allowed to play sex games with one of them, a thirteen year-old girl—and we are treated again to Updike's detached descriptions of the adventures of Ben's phallus, a sort of brother-self he tenderly cherishes and sympathizes with. Indeed, we begin to realize that this is the only meaningful relation he is capable of—and to appreciate the depth of sorrow that comes to him when that other is laid low.

Like DeLillo, Updike feels a twinge of novelistic desire to find some coherent positive message, and he offers an unconvincing promise, in the appearance of the torus, of an eventual "blissful certainty of universal reconciliation." But there is really no escaping the point of view of his latest representative of our species—this egotistic sensualist who is what we may survive to be in our culture's old age. Ben writes his own story as a journal kept through four seasons, and he has all the benefit of his creator's mastery of purling sentences, his sensitivity to the beauty of the changing New England landscape as well as his power to observe the ridiculous in human behavior. But, like Updike himself, he does not expect to tell one of those stories novels used to abound in. Of these he says, at the end, "I read a lot, in my ignominious, tender, doze-prone state, avoiding the emotional stresses of fiction—that clacking, crudely carpentered old roller coaster, every up and down mocked by the triviality, when all is said and done, of human experience, its Sisyphean repetitiveness—and sticking to the alternate lives, in time and space, of history and the *National Geographic*." Updike's own weariness permeates the book too and leaves the reader dissatisfied as much with his depressing postmodern protagonist as with the offhand non-tale that he tells.

Margaret Drabble makes the personal seem product cranked out by modern British history. As one of her characters in *The Radiant Way*, published in 1987, says, "We are not ourselves, we are crossroads, meeting places, points on a curve, we cannot exist independently for we are nothing but signs, conjunctions, aggregations." Her critics have been quick to see as a fault the fact that her characters tend to be gingerbread figures cut out by the determinants of class or ideology. They are sociological abstracts with traits too conventionally familiar. We miss that sense of the mystery of personality which vitalizes the novels of greater realists. Still, she has an observing eye, a witty style, an interest in ideas and conditions for their own sake—and maybe you can call her a sort of lesser Aldous Huxley for our time.

The Witch of Exmoor is Drabble's first novel to follow the trilogy of the

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Thatcher years which began with *The Radiant Way*, continued with *A Natural Curiosity* in 1989, and concluded with *The Gates of Ivory* in 1992. As in these earlier novels, she asks us to interest ourselves in the lives of some upper-class, well-educated members of that derelict elite whose direction of the nation's destiny seems less and less secure. As the book opens we find a family group gathered at successful lawyer Daniel Palmer's country house in Hampshire; visiting for the weekend are his two sisters and their husbands and children. Daniel is a representative moneyed "gentleman" (no one uses this archaism anymore, of course) whose grandfather was a Lincolnshire beet farmer. His brothers-in-law are newer assimilated members of the ruling caste. There is Nathan Herz, a Jewish advertising executive who is designing a program to "sell" a reduced National Health program to the British public. And there is David D'Anger, a Guyanese aristocrat who has been an academic and a journalist but has gone in for politics and will soon be an MP for a marginal constituency in West Yorkshire. The three men and Daniel's wife, Patsy, who occupies herself unstrenuously with good works, his stylish sister, Rosemary, who runs an art complex, and his other sister, Gogo, a neurologist, are playing a parlor game proposed by David. It is called "The Veil of Ignorance" and requires the participants to imagine a "just society" they would accept even if they were denied any foreknowledge of their own place in it. None of the participants, it turns out, really has any idea of the new social arrangements he or she would be willing to push the button for on such terms, and the host declares simply, "what I have I hold"—a condition which might be guaranteed, as his daughter, Emily, tells him, by willing into replication society as it is, "stone by stone, leaf by leaf." For the others, even for David, who sometimes has imagined the construction of a better human community in his native Guyana, the Utopian impulse is only a fleeting idea. Perhaps closer to the hidden reality of the present or to the probable future is the fantasy game of the three couples' younger children who occupy themselves upstairs while their elders sit speculating below. After looking at "video nasties" Patsy has been reviewing for a censorship board, they have turned to "the Power Game," played with toy figures and directed by David's gifted son Ben. In the course of the game there are "many wounded, many tortured, many raped, many dead."

What the Palmer siblings are really gathered to discuss, anyhow, is something else—what to do about their absent mother Frieda, who has become more and more eccentric. Once a successful writer who made a good deal of money, she has sunk her reputation by writing a huge historical novel about Queen Christina of Sweden, refused to pay VAT charges, abandoned her silver Saab when she found herself caught in a traffic jam in the West End, and moved out to a dilapidated Victorian chateau

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on the Exmoor coast, having cut off communication with everyone. Her discreetly callous children are worried that she may do something crazy with her money such as donating it all to some bizarre cause or—worse—giving it all to just one of them at the expense of the others. Their fears are justified. After she is found drowned at the foot of her cliff it turns out that her will does leave everything to grandson Ben. An earlier will is uncovered revealing that she had planned to provide his father with funding for a Guyanean "just society."

Drabble does not quite know how she wants us to feel about Mad Mom Frieda. On the one hand she appears—with her attachment to crank ideas about the environment and diet, her idiosyncratic feminism (which was the reason she wrote about Queen Christina), and her sentimental radicalism (which made her take David's talk about the just society more seriously than he meant it)—to be a dotty relict of the radical sixties, a time when she was young and neglected them for the sake of her own self-development. But she may have also been intended, as the title of the book suggests, as a mythic being in touch with the spirits of the air. Of course, the house of England is not, for Drabble, Howard's End. Frieda hardly resembles E. M. Forster's Mrs. Wilcox, who left a healing legacy of sympathy for the human family. The Palmer children go on much as before, though Nathan Herz dies, also drowned, the victim of a long-cherished, secret love for a dead girl, and talented Ben almost dies, overburdened by irrational guilt for having been made his grandmother's heir. In the end, this frail inheritor of her dubious legacy acquiesces in being just like everyone else.

It seems that Drabble herself doesn't believe very much in what she is doing. Her novel's plot ravels out into unlikely and irrelevant incident, like the account of Nathan's hidden obsession or Rosemary's seizure of death fears when she discovers that she is suffering from elevated blood pressure. Worst of all, there is the tailing out of the story at the last when young Emily, alone at the abandoned Exmoor mansion, confronts a band of dogs and hunters and saves the deer who has bounded into the parlor! It is still true that Drabble's descriptive prose occasionally erupts into a grim poetry, as when Frieda's moor seems infected by a pervasive degeneracy as she walks there with her dog, passes a sick cow and a dead calf, and then,

> a creature more dreadful than the calf. It was a sheep. Its matted pelt hung off it in lumps to trail upon the ground. The wool was yellow-white and stained with blotches of rusty red, the dirty dull red of dried menstrual blood. Its face was thin and shorn and quivering, its body shapeless beneath its ragged outgrowths. It gazed at the woman

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> and the dog in misery. It was the sheep of affliction, the sheep of God.
> It gazed at them knowingly, then gazed away again.

There is something visionary about this, but it does not fit into the general tone of the novel which is governed by a flippant voice that constantly intrudes to hold up to ridicule not only the characters but the narrative process itself. Drabble may just intend to be modishly postmodern when she invites the reader into the writing process. "Let us widen the circle. We need a new character," she says as she welcomes us into her studio. "Imagine David D'Anger," she says, "You say he is an impossibility, and you cannot imagine him, any more than he can imagine the nature of the revolution which would bring about the world he thinks he wishes to construct. But you are wrong." She is not writing fiction but a too-complacent essay—telling rather than showing—when she declares, "So there you have them. The Middle Classes of England. Is there any hope whatsoever, or any fear that they will change?"

Nadine Gordimer is a better novelist than Drabble, able to make us feel the intense individuality of her characters, yet conveying in her best work her acute feeling for the complicated social reality of her South Africa. Her personal engagement in that reality is well known; she was a member of the outlawed African National Congress during the apartheid years and never chose, as a privileged white person, to leave her country despite the fact that two of her novels were banned by its government. When she was a young girl, she read Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* and began to think of writing about the plight of the miners in her own country. But her loyalty to her art has kept her aware that the divisions of national life have made her chief subject her own experience of the confinements of those privileges. No one has written better description of Johannesburg and its black townships than Gordimer did in *Burger's Daughter* (1979) but the essential story of that powerful novel is its heroine's struggle to achieve a difficult identity with the otherness of black South Africa. Thirty years ago—at the start of her carreer—she wrote, "The white writer, perforce, belongs to an Elite, and, from the day he is born *baas* to the day *he* is buried in *his* segregated cemetery, cannot share the potential of experience of the fifteen million on the other side of the color bar. I believe that white writers will have less and less to write about as their inside view of the total society becomes more and more restricted. And so long as our society remains compartmentalized, our literature will be stretched on the rack between propaganda, on the one side, and, on the other, art as an embellishment of leisure." But her pessimism has been refuted by the record of the dozen novels and nine collections of short stories in which she has so

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often mastered that dilemma.

Now that the compartment walls are down at last, Gordimer writes of a new society in which invisible barriers, not surprisingly, continue to operate. In 1990 she attempted the impossible in *My Son's Story*, a novel about a black revolutionary's love affair with a white woman that proved unconvincing despite the writer's effort to make a classic situation universal. The following year, as South Africa began to dismantle the old order, Gordimer received the Nobel prize, however, the Swedish Academy singling out for particular praise her 1981 *July's People*, which described an imagined future in which a white liberal couple escapes violence during civil war by taking refuge in the village hut of their former servants. Her viewpoint had been that of the white consciousness making its inadequate adjustment to the unforeseeable. Contemporary actuality has not, however, filled Gordimer with confidence. The heroine of *None to Accompany Me* (1994), a white civil rights lawyer, becomes prominent with the final triumph of majority rule and a black resistance couple returns from exile. But Vera Stark has sacrificed too much; her personal love life has long been disordered; the Maqomas find themselves set aside by the new leadership.

Gordimer's latest book may seem an admission that she can no longer say anything significant about politics. Or a final surrender to the temptation simply to entertain, to offer her readers something for the "embellishment of leisure." The *Times* reviewer, Michiko Kakutani, calls *The House Gun* "little more than a courtroom thriller, dressed up with some clumsy allusions to apartheid's legacy of violence and the misuses of freedom. . .a light if sometimes gripping thriller with pretensions." I strongly disagree, though the thriller aspect is there, and sometimes seems to take over attention from the novelist's serious themes. But these remain to make the book express the novelist's ultimate wisdom about her world.

The narrating author says at one point, "This is not a detective story," but it *is* a mystery story about a murder committed by the son of well-to-do liberal whites of the kind she has written about again and again. It concerns what seems like a classic *crime passionel*, about which there is no mystery. Duncan Lindgard has come unexpectedly upon his girl at the climax of coitus with a friend of his, and the next day he shoots him in the head. There is nothing for the detectives to do except verify the murderer's confession. But things are really more complicated. The skilled and expensive lawyer who is hired is determined to develop a defense based on mitigating factors, and, bit by bit, develops a story which he communicates to the Lindgards. There is the girl, Natalie, whom Duncan had saved from suicide and loved devotedly despite her difficult personality. She is revealed to be a destructive as well as self-destructive crazy woman who resented the fact that she had been rescued and resented the presumptions of her

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rescuer who expected gratitude and sought to impose a new, conformist self upon her. And the betrayer friend, Carl, turns out to have been no ordinary object of heterosexual jealousy; he was gay and had once been Duncan's own lover—so the witnessed coupling was double betrayal, betrayal by both man and woman of the man each had loved and made love to. Finally, as the defense argues in court, Duncan's temporary loss of conscious restraint, his transport of irrational violence, had been provoked when he had come back to hear Carl tell him, "Oh dear. I'm sorry, Bra," using the affectionate black name for "brother" which had been picked up by white gays. Carl had said that the whole thing had been nothing to get worked up about, no big deal, after all, a bit of fun among friends, and had callously babbled on, offering a drink, until Duncan went blank.

Gordimer brings us to this fuller comprehension of the ugly tale with considerable narrative skill, using the conversations the elder Lindgards have with Duncan's lawyer during the weeks preceding the trial. Toward the end, the screw of tension is tightened by the fact that the trial takes place just as the Constitutional Court is reviewing the constitutionality of the death penalty, a legacy of the old regime still on the books. Perhaps Gordimer prolongs the excruciation too far when we are forced to follow all the sinuosities of the examining magistrate's balancing of evidence for and against premeditation. But we hold our breath to the last.

Yet this is not all the story, either. *The House Gun* picks up a number of current topics—capital punishment for one, which has only recently been eliminated in South Africa, the lack of handgun control, another issue of the moment, for another. The novel's murder might not have taken place if the gun kept handy as defense against a violent intruder had not been in plain view on a table when Duncan confronted Carl the second time. The larger theme of violence in the new society (the murder rate is said, today, to be ten times our level in the U.S., violent as we have become) rumbles behind this lurid tale. This is true even though Duncan is no child of the streets or of rural poverty and displacement. He is a young man whose upbringing has been uninvaded by stress, as far as his parents know. And these parents have been exemplary ethical models—a father who is eminently respectable as well as successful and religious, a mother who is a caretaker of others, a medical doctor.

But beyond these topicalities the most fundamental theme in this novel is one that has always occupied Gordimer—that uneasy relation between the races which even the end of apartheid has not made into brotherhood. Claudia, who had so often touched black skin in her practice, had "worked at clinics to staunch the wounds that racism gashed" and it was not her kind but "other people [who] tear-gassed and set dogs upon blacks, evicted them from their homes to live in shacks from which old men and

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women were brought to her dying of pneumonia and children were brought to her dwarfed by malnutrition." But Claudia never followed any of her patients out of her clinic or gave refuge to the victims of a cruel totalitarianism. Harald only discovers his connection with the unfortunate when he waits out his son's trial for murder. He discovers that "he and his wife belonged, now, to the other side of privilege. Neither whiteness, nor observance of the teachings of Father and Son, nor the pious respectability of liberalism, nor money that had kept them in safety—that other form of segregation—could change their status. In a way, that status was definitive as the forced removals of the old regime; no chance of remaining where they had been, surviving in themselves *as they were*."

Aid in their enlightenment has also "come from the other side" at last, the side of black experience, through the black lawyer Duncan had chosen to represent him. Duncan himself is rarely present in the book, his physical imprisonment seeming to stand for his removal from the scene in which he becomes only a challenge to the understanding of others. But Hamilton Motsamai is perhaps the novel's most important character besides the elder Lindgards. He is a sophisticated representative of the new Africa, a source of insight and humor—and of hope. As they despair, fall apart from each other, descend to begging the lawyer to do anything, anything, to "get him off" this "stranger from the other side of a divided past," saves their son. He saves him by simply making everything explicable. As in *July's People*, the reversal of role between black and white has been the source of the white man's new vision. The Lindgards grow close to Motsamai and also to a young black gay friend of Duncan's, Khulu, who becomes another son. Their unadmitted aversion for homosexuality drops away along with their latent racism. And they look forward to the birth of Natalie's child—who may be either Duncan's or Carl's, a grandson in any case. Even this madwoman provides an unexpected enlightenment as she exposes, in her ravings, the arrogance and fallacy of master-race presumption. Duncan, she says, "takes on other people. Forces. Can't leave them alone. . . .And he's perfectly ugly when you resist." She taunted him: "You wanted to save me in the missionary position"—wanted, that is, to marry her and make her have children and have a career, too, because that's what the woman he saved should have—and she had stayed with him for her own reasons and helped to destroy him.

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IGOR WEBB

Yvor Winters as Teacher

Even at the time that Yvor Winters was best known, he occupied an eccentric position both among poets and literary critics. His severe tastes and beliefs, and his inclination to quarrel, relegated him to an embattled, isolated citadel. But here he was master, exerting profound influence over generations of students. Those of his students who took to writing poetry or criticism for a time formed a loose, devoted, talented, if minor, school within the wider literary world.

I am going to write about Yvor Winters as a teacher. And I should make it clear that by the time I got to enroll in his classes in the early 1960s, Winters had been at Stanford for a very long time and was nearing the end both of his career and his life. There was current a nasty undergraduate quip about Winters, with his ponderous walk and dour appearance, to the effect that he had waited all of his life to arrive at last at his late sixties and be able to speak authentically of the shadow of death. Few students, I think, were aware of his serious illness as a young man. Anyway, in those days, when everyone over thirty was an enemy, to be over sixty was an unimaginable misfortune. As it happened, Winters died not long afterwards.

Winters' physical movements, his manner of speaking, indeed everything about him had the studied, pugnacious methodicity of his essays. Of a solid and portly build, with a large head and large bumps above the eyes—a sign, he liked to claim, of exceptional powers of observation—Winters lumbered down the overbright Stanford walks like a literary Darth Vader. He usually walked alone. You had the feeling that if you were to dare approach him, you had better have something weighty and thoroughly worked out to say. And whatever that was had better be right. A medieval sadness enveloped him, ominous and dark.

As a teacher, Winters did everything wrong. By today's elaborate standards of care, clarity, and prophylactic completeness, the mimeographed "syllabus" Winters provided to his cowed classes was a scandal. The poor innocent who had signed up unaware—like me—was likely to be panic-stricken by the absence of any hint of just what you were supposed to study. Oh yes, there was a list of readings. But—for example in his famous class on "The Lyric"—this list amounted to no more than the names of poets he expected you to read. Since there were no poems singled out for particular notice and no books ordered at the bookstore or on reserve in the

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library, you wound up reading the entire works of writers that even graduate students fresh from fairly comprehensive undergraduate courses of study in poetry—like mine at Tufts—were not very likely to have come across earlier or even to have heard of. (And of course where you knew the poet, what Winters had to say turned out to bear so little resemblance to what you had been taught or had managed to ferret out for yourself, that you might just as well never have heard of the poet.) So you were formidably intimidated from the very start.

To make matters worse, all of Winters' classes except his writing classes were very large—it seemed usually of about two hundred students. Although Winters complained of his years at Stanford as of years in exile, years when no one paid him much notice, when few cared to study with him, when the English Department did not hide the sentiment that they would have preferred that he teach elsewhere and more or less persecuted him—none of this was in evidence in the 1960s. His classes were packed. He was the great man of the Department, one of the most sought-after professors on campus.

You had to make your own way in these classes, especially since Winters employed only one form of instruction: he lectured. Far from encouraging discussion, he did not encourage questions. Often he read from his own books of essays, without commentary. He was prone to insulting his students. He made it abundantly clear that teaching was a chore: he was unlucky not to have a private income, and he was unlucky not to have the patron that, as the greatest literary mind of his generation, he naturally would have found to support his art in a better age. Instead he was forced to live out his days fulfilling the thankless, dry, dreary work of teaching. He was bone-tired from his years of such drudgery, and he made sure you knew it. The worst part of teaching was that you had to teach imbeciles, perhaps well-meaning and even smart imbeciles, but imbeciles nonetheless. The voluminous stupidity of most people, including of course most of the Department of English, professors as a class, most other poets and critics, and, alas, his hundreds of students, was the subject of many of his lectures. What exasperated, exhausted, and not infrequently, one guessed, excited Winters was that it seemed to be in the nature of things that the very great majority of people lacked the intelligence and sensibility to appreciate life at all—to feel deeply, to *see* what was there in front of their eyes, to *hear* the sounds of a poem, never mind to be able actually to grasp what Yvor Winters had to say. A great poet, for Winters, was not like us—but necessarily rare, sensitive to ideas, impressions, the world in a way that the vast majority of people could not glimpse and certainly could not approximate. His lectures were peppered with the preface, "You won't understand this, but . . ." Talent is a gift, innate, and he said brutally that it is sentimental if

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not criminal to think or act otherwise. He would tell the story of his youthful ambition to be, of all things, a boxer—except that try as he might other men were faster and stronger than he. There was nothing to be done about it. As in boxing, so in poetry: between the great, who are very few and swift—he among them—and the rest of us there yawns a vast divide.

Under the circumstances, only one pedagogy made sense: he rendered judgment. Most of the judgments were negative. He took especial pleasure in quoting passages of prose or poetry from writers others considered to be masters—for example, Yeats—that in themselves, as literal statements of an idea, appeared absurd. And so the judgments: Yeats was a very silly man; Hart Crane gifted but misguided; Williams at least could *see*; poor Ezra. . . .

His main ideas were simple, and simply expressed. In Isaiah Berlin's famous distinction between two types of intellect, the fox for whom many strategies, ideas, methods are always open, and the hedgehog possessed of one big idea, Winters was emphatically a hedgehog. He knew one big thing, which was that a poem is an act of moral judgment.

This one big idea can be expanded to a train of reasoning something like this:

Life is a serious business, best understood through art. In art as in life, the point is to strive for perfection. Poetry is the highest, most complete, and most perfectible art. In the poem the visual and the auditory, the intellectual and the emotional, the denotative and the connotative, logic and imagination, the private and the public, reflection and sensation, judgment and apprehension—are one. The short poem, because of its brevity and its formal constraints, provides the best possibility of achieving perfection.

Poetry, thus, is a complete moral judgment of life expressed through a disciplined language. The rational element of this judgment can be paraphrased as, and ought to reflect, a logical proposition and must stand up as a proposition to merit attention. The sound of the language, and its connotative painting, ought precisely to suggest the emotion appropriate to the poem's rational statement. In this sense, a poem is an *act*.

Although the subject of a poem can be anything, the more profound the subject the greater the poem and the greater its demands on the rational and emotional intelligence of the poet. Therefore, for Winters, poems about the great facts of the human condition, in particular our mortality, are potentially the greatest poems, assuming the subject is deeply engaged, and the poet's gift is equal to the subject. To achieve greatness in such poems requires exceptional intelligence, sensitivity, and art. The most "mature" and "civilized" achievement of such greatness, in Winters' judgment, occurs in the "plain style" of poetry, for such a style, as for example in Sir Thomas Wyatt, exemplifies the greatest seriousness of attitude and the greatest discipline of form, or the highest possible marriage of intellect and sustained

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form. The great poet, consequently, is also, in his work and because of his work, the greatest human being, the person most fully human in every respect. The ability to achieve such stature is naturally rare, and "a gift"—you can't learn to be a great poet. Since great poems and great poets do exist, they are our ultimate instances of the nobility and grandness of the human being.

Before this spectacle the reader's task is appreciation and judgment. In Winters' judgment, "the two greatest short poems ever written" are both by Paul Valery. Here is his account of what he considered the best of these two, *Ebauche d'un Serpent*, published in *The Function of Criticism*:

"It is a monologue spoken by the Serpent in the Garden of Eden, and deals with the Serpent's relationship to God, with the temptation of Eve, and with the nature of evil. The poem employs the Judeo-Christian myth and depends upon the Christian concept of evil as privation: but it is neither Jewish nor Christian in the full development of its thought. The general theme is approximately this: God, or perfect being, had existed in a state of immobile perfection; the created universe is a flaw in this perfection—God, tired of the pure spectacle of himself, destroyed his own perfection, dissipated his principle into consequences, his unity into stars. Heaven is his error, Time is his ruin, and with them the gaping and animal abyss. The Serpent was the first and greatest creature, who now illuminates the diminution of God with all the fires of the Seducer. The Serpent had loved God to the point of complete loss of self; but he now hates him equally, for he realizes that by virtue of being a creature he is imperfect, deprived of the knowledge which as an intellectual creature he infinitely desires, and so damned. God was aware of his error when he created man, and his breath upon the clay was a sigh of despair. The Serpent hates men created in the image of God, just as he hates God, who creates so many imperfect prodigies; the Serpent is the one who modifies and retouches, and who will, in other words, seduce mankind from its simple and animal felicity to the same passion for unobtainable knowledge which is the source of his own agony . . . .Eve is being seduced into a desire for infinite knowledge, but the psychological pattern is that of a sexual seduction; the psychological details, however, are not merely psychological but are metaphysical as well. Eve falls, and the Serpent is saddened. The Tree of Knowledge is shaken, and then the Serpent addresses the Tree in the final stanzas, stanzas in which he turns away from the somewhat pathetic and trivial sin of seducing Eve to his original desire for unobtainable knowledge. He is so created that he desires infinite knowledge, and he is so created that he cannot have it. The desire is his nature, his greatness, his sin, and his torture, and it is inescapable. The Tree grows infinitely toward infinity; the Serpent (this old expert at chess) cradles himself in the branches, so that the fruit trembles

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and falls: the fruit of death, despair, and disorder. The Serpent offers to the glory of God the triumph of his own sadness; and the thirst which made the tree gigantic exalts even to Being (or God) the strange Omnipotence of Nothingness (the Serpent). The theme is the most inclusive of tragic themes: one might describe it as the theme of tragedy."

Winters' paraphrase or summary of Valery's poem captures well the qualities of his mind and his voice—and so fairly conveys the Winters who spoke at the front of the lecture hall. His "delivery" was in the plain style that he so deeply loved, simple but telling, apt, declarative, somberly disenchanted in its rhythms (this could be witty and even amusing), with a suggestive—or, better—*persuasive* aura of tough-minded confrontation with ultimate things. His summary of Valery displays something of what Winters wanted you to appreciate as "method," an achievement of great importance to him. For Winters, method distinguishes the professional or serious critic from the amateur or dilettante. But his summary shows equally how much his method is permeated by its presuppositions and predilections. A great deal of what you learned to emulate in Winters' reading had to do with discrimination and an eye for telling detail. But what drew the eye to a detail had as much to do with a world of reference already in place—a world of reference that as a student you had to go to some trouble to master—as with any particular insight arising from a particular poem. The trouble here for Winters as a teacher, and for any teacher, is that no poem, after all, can be "mastered" beforehand; whatever you take mastery to mean, it depends in each new case on sensibility, learning, intelligence, and perhaps adroitness of experience as these can be gathered toward insight when confronted with the new. Still, however unlikely it may be that the thing can be taught, this is what Winters aimed to teach and what he succeeded in having you struggle to learn.

After repeated encounters with examples of the plain style you began to approach some semblance of familiarity with its terrain and its strategies. In Winters' account of it, the plain style—from Gascoigne to J.V. Cunningham—enacts, probes, and discovers (and "utters") a particular world view, one in which emotional control evinces a depth of disillusion, in which sensousness and sanity seem ever at odds, and in which loss, with its metaphorical reach towards death, rouses an intense sensory remembrance that in its very vividness both tempts the poet to escape and, since escape is an impossibility for the plain style poet, also serves as the persuasive token of a hard-bought maturity—that tragic resignation which is the hallmark of this kind of writing. How to read turned out to be intimately bound, in short, with what to read for. In the Dionysian sixties this comprehensively lapsarian point of view seemed hugely archaic, but also to have the size and solidity of a great monument. It stood there before you like the

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Sphinx, challenging everything you inchoately believed by its very indifference to everything you believed.

Obviously the passage I have quoted is prose and not poetry, but it has some of the qualities of poetry. There is often in poetry, especially great poetry, a moment when the verse seems to skip a beat into a deeper, more intense range of meaning and feeling, that quality of revelation that Emily Dickinson perhaps had in mind when she said that you can tell a good poem because it knocks the top of your head off. You might say this is a joyful though infrequently a happy moment. One of Winters' sentences offers an approximation of what I mean:

> Eve falls, and the Serpent is saddened.

The "skip" occurs here at the apparently temporal conjuction, "and," since "what follows" from Eve's fall is not in time but in meaning. The reader's conventional expectations are disturbed. Why is the Serpent not pleased? That his seduction creates sadness is, as Winters (or Valery) says, a triumph, which he offers to the Glory of God, even as his (and our) tragic fate is most amply revealed. His sadness (his self-aware and overreaching, his "prodigious" imperfection) provides our epiphany.

Of course just when a poem knocks the top of your head off and when it doesn't, is notoriously difficult to convey, and something about which there seems to be no end of argument. At best the teacher can point, a method to which Winters, like F. R. Leavis, often resorted. Central in Winters' illustrations was his repeated effort to get you to notice the contrary pulls of the emotions attendant on loss and the desire to put understanding into words.

For Winters, as for Wallace Stevens, "Death is the mother of beauty," but in the sense that it stuns you into wordlessness even as the mind works on to lasso a chaos of pain into language. The stunned consciousness is wordless, does not attend to the mind's dogged insistence on sequence and order, is overcome by sensation, which assumes a brief but extraordinarily acute articulateness, akin to the fierce immediacy of a certain kind of painting, or to a desultory, agonized music, like the jazz of a New Orleans funeral procession. The mourner groans, weeps, or wails, loses awareness of time and place, or is absently intent on minute particulars. The world's plethora is now almost unbearably single and immediate.

So different from language, which distances, rationalizes, approximates, inhabits duration and contains recollection, and wishes to make sense.

In the poetry that Winters most admired, sound, tending towards wordlessness and chaos, is at once contained and articulated by the denotations of language into music. Out of this simultaneous compression and release the

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poem establishes the feeling that, as Wordsworth said, has by the time of the writing become, for the poet, a memory. But in insisting on the poem as a moral act and a moral judgment, Winters insisted on a kind of totality both in composition and reading. In composition in the sense that at the moment of writing the imagination so absolutely recreates the blow that death delivers to consciousness as to plunge the poet into the wordless void, the terrible sound, of a full emotional realization of mortality. Out of the struggle to make this groaning and wailing intelligible, from this straining of capability, come the words and the form and that other sound, the beauty, which is the poem. And to attend altogether to this creation of beauty is what the poem asks of the reader and what Winters tried to teach his students.

For this reason, I believe, Winters the teacher was first and foremost, first and last, a man reading. A "good ear" was for Winters the quintessential feature of poetic sensibility. His lectures always began with his oral rendering of a poem, and his own reading encompassed his philosophy, outlook, method, and theory of versification.

For Winters, the foundation of spoken English is the iamb. In his view, consequently, verse in English—poetry in English after its emergence from Middle English—is the creation of writers like Gascoigne and Goodge who discovered how to transform the natural beat of the spoken language into rhythm, mainly in tetrameters and pentameters built with iambic feet. Unlike classical meter or French meter or meter in Old English, modern English meter, for Winters, is a matter of stress marked out in feet. And for him almost everything spoken in English is a variant of the omnipresent iamb. The founders of English verse deployed the iambic foot with the fanatical regularity of the ideologues of a new dispensation, varying the stress infrequently and therefore with noticeable effect. On this dogmatic foundation, according to Winters, all the poets in English have built their church, beginning with the great poets of the sixteenth century—who quickly assimilated the lessons of the founders and composed the lyrics that ever since have dominated English poetic language—and including the apostates of "free" verse.

In this respect—as in all others—Winters steered well away from anything in the least liable to be misinterpeted as meretricious (for this reason, I think, he undervalued stylized writing, say in the Cavalier poets or in Yeats). His reading, in a wholly American voice and accent, without much trace of region or locale and also without any echo of English pronunciation or intonation, a kind of flat drawl, employed a slight elevation in tone and a slight exaggeration of breath to distinguish it from ordinary conversation. The music of his reading depended on a notable restraint whose dramatic effects derived precisely from the subtle excesses of a puritanical formality devoid of pomp and display: once more, the plain style.

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Sir Thomas Wyatt's technically spectacular opening stanza in "They Flee From Me" was an excellent vehicle for Winters' prowess, and a fine example of the subjects and attitudes of which he approved.

> They flee from me, that sometime did me seek
> With naked foot stalking in my chamber.
> I have seen them, gentle, tame, and meek,
> That now are wild, and do not remember
> That sometime they put themselves in danger
> To take bread at my hand; and now they range,
> Busily seeking with a continual change.

Here a kind of musical garland is composed of innumerable slight variations on a deceptively primitive iambic pattern. Beginning with the tension of sound and stress in the opening foot, and continuing with internal rhymes, half-rhymes, repetitions, and delicate changes of pace in each line, and with subtle emphases produced by caesuras, enjambments, and end-rhymes, this stanza beautifully illustrates the possibilities of a simple language whose emotional charges are released by exquisitely minute departures from rigorous expectations.

Consider, for example, the variants of the "e" sound in the first line, emphasized by the slight quickening in "sometime" and "seek," the latter lifting the pace, opening as if to fly away with the double "ee" sound and then abruptly and firmly closing to mark the end both of the line and of the action. Or the effect of the repetition of "sometime"—

> sometime did me seek
> sometime they put themselves in danger;

or of the three feminine rhymes "chamber," "remember," "danger." Or the tremendous difference Wyatt manages between "seek," which, as I have already said, firmly closes the opening line and thought, and "seeking," which does the opposite. The final line of the stanza contains an excess of short syllables that either skip and waver ("busily") or glide ("continual"), mimicking the reversal from constancy to inconstancy.

As with the versification, so with the argument. The opening clause—"They flee from me . . ."—evokes the whole world of loss that in various ways we encounter in the entire body of plain style verse. The poem's themes are quickly and effortlessly introduced in the next few lines; these themes are constancy and inconstancy, desire and loss. The stanza's courtly pun turns on the ambiguities of "stalking," with its suggested multiple contraries and changes of role: those who were meek are wild; those who were stalked do the stalking; those who were in danger are dangerous; those who

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were constant and innocent are inconstant and fickle.

The poet judges himself for what he was and did and for what he is and does. In recreating the morally ambiguous, dangerous, and even deadly sexual game that no longer simulates danger but has become profoundly painful, he tactfully employs acute remembrance to display an ironic constancy and its price, which is loss. Earlier—sometime—when he was perhaps more careless and unknowing of the hazards of his indulgence in Royal sport than he ought to have been, he was in truth no more dangerous to his mistresses than any man might appear to be to one of the King's deer, even though what he holds in his hand is bread and not an arrow. It is perhaps not clear who "with naked foot" did the stalking in that earlier playful sexual game whose true danger has now worked round full circle actually to wound him. As a relic of a sometime morality overcome by fashion, by newfangledness, his loss gains him his chastened understanding. His capacity for satisfaction, associated with repose and stillness—both then and now—contrasts with the "business" and "continual change" of those who are now in search of a fulfillment for which they are no longer fit. So the structure of thought and the structure of emotion in the poem are the same, arising from the same fundamental moral contrary.

I studied "They Flee From Me" in Winters' class at the very moment that The Rolling Stones produced their dionysian, mind-blowing version of "Satisfaction," hardly a plain style piece of work. The song, which in other hands can have something of the qualities of Wyatt's poem, comes from the Stones with all the raucous, tactless, raw power of "a strange fashion of forsaking" quite simply unloosed. For the Stones as for Shelley, "wild" is not an extreme but the sole emotional pitch that an alive, albeit spoiled and self-indulgent sensibility can seize as its most effective weapon in the melodramatized warfare between primitive authenticity and the indifference of a self-satisfied, arid "adult" culture.

I assume Winters would have hated it, as he hated the expressive intensity of the Romantics as unbalanced and just this side (and sometimes on the other side) of being unhinged. But in a century many of whose defining images barely express a practically unthinkable extremity—the trenches of Flanders, the piles of starved bodies bulldozed into mass graves in the death camps, the atomic mushroom, the humiliated faces of those uttering the recantations of the communist show trials, and on and on—Winters' field of vision can seem small, narrow, and marginal, excluding rage and ecstasy alike. What he chose to discover among twentieth-century poets was continuity with the plain style tradition that, as he saw it, had persisted only infrequently beyond the seventeenth century and resurfaced with force only in the twentieth. His wide reading did not seem to have encompassed, say, Paul Celan, Miguel Hernández, Montale, or Ahkmatova. In any event, his

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concentration on a few themes and a few poems from the sixteenth century English and the modern American poets, while enforcing a disciplined focus on the part of his students, also had the effect of making an over-insistent case for a greatness that a slight shift of context or perspective could deflate to something small, prim, morbid.

There is a Jansenist strain in Winters' taste for the virtues of disenchantment, as if the only thing to be said about God had been said by Pascal. I am exaggerating. But any teacher who is tone-deaf to the fury of the times, which is Fate to the young, risks speaking too little to them and too much to himself. Winters made an art of such risks. He did not bestow on his classes any higher or lower esteem than on the literary audience to whom he addressed his often condescending essays. The Romanticism of the young was, in any case, only a slightly exaggerated instance of what in his view was an error besetting the whole intellectual culture. He stood doggedly and defiantly apart from much of the modernist project, rejecting *The Waste Land*, *The Cantos*, and *Paterson* as failures. These poems reached too far, were too mannered, tried to encompass too much, and were way too long. Forced by the inexorable logic of his position to dismiss the work—so it sometimes seemed—of just about everyone, he nonetheless, by sheer force of personality, persuaded many of us sitting in his classes that everyone was in fact wrong and Adelaide Crapsey, Edgar Bowers, and J.V. Cunningham were right. As a teacher, he willed victories from a stance and a method and a series of judgments that in most other hands would have guaranteed an embarrassing flop. He was smart, learned, lucid, and deadly serious. He mattered. Short of condescending to him in turn, you could hardly do otherwise than try to beat him at his own game. Even his penchant for lists and judgments—these are the four best poets of the decade, this line is good, that rhyme is weak—forced you to clarify your thinking, systematize your intuitions, question your beliefs, tighten your slackness.

All of which made for a remarkable moral education. From the vantage point of today's critical outlook, when poetry is too often seen as exemplifying something, or the product of mass sentiments or unconscious ideology, or when the inner life is simply subjective, his combative aesthetic, with its emphasis on judgment, reason, precise description and accurate diction, on discrimination among subjects, on labor and learning, on perfectibility of form and statement, on the greatness of individual talent, on the inescapably tragic dimension of human existence—all this seems powerful and affirmative. After his all-too obvious flaws are noted, Winters still looms large, calling upon our loyalty to a heroic Master in whom we never altogether believed.

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EUGENE GOODHEART

Thomas Mann's Comic Spirit

The narrator of *The Magic Mountain* begins by urging patience in the reader. The journey to the mountain will be a long one, the stay, though anticipated to be short, will be much longer (seven years in duration). The eventful uneventfulness of Hans Castorp's visit to this tubercular cousin, Joachim Ziemssin, occurs in slow time. The passage of time is of course one of the great themes of the novel, endlessly and oppressively reflected upon by the narrator. The reader needs to be patient, if he is to be rewarded. The narrator remarks "and so this storyteller will not be finished telling our Hans's story in only a moment or two."

We have lost the habit of slow time. Our attention span, conditioned and exemplified by television, demands speedy delivery, rapid change, instant gratification. *The Magic Mountain* requires an audience that will find relief from the speed with which things pass in contemporary society. Slow time is the time of illness. For the chronically ill, excluded from the pressures of the workaday world, there are no deadlines to be met, no responsibility to others. There is only the narcissistic concern with one's own body: the schedule of doctor's visits and the taking of medicine, the routine of meals. The sick person must learn patience. In the Berghof sanatorium, the site of the novel, one aspires to be a patient.

It has been often said of the novel that the illness of the residents of the sanatorium (drawn from a cross-section of Europeans: Germans, Italians, Austrians, Russians, etc.) reflects a civilization in crisis. The novel is set at a time immediately before the Great War. At the end, the residents leave the sanatorium as the alarms of war are sounded, and the last view we have of Hans Castorp is in battle fatigues trudging through the mud in a hail of fire. The publication date is 1924, three years after the publication date of *Civilization and Its Discontents.* The ending of the novel has an uncanny resemblance to the ending of Freud's essay. "And out of this worldwide festival of death, this rutting fever that inflames the rainy evening sky all around—will love someday rise up out of this too?" Freud writes: "And now it is to be expected that the other of the two 'Heavenly Powers,' eternal Eros, will make an effort to assert himself in the struggle with his equally immortal adversary [Thanatos]. But who can foresee with what success and with what result?"

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This may be taking the novel more seriously or rather with a different kind of seriousness than intended. Certainly the characters themselves seem not to sense crisis or take their illness as an omen of impending catastrophe. Castorp explains to his uncle, James Tienappel, who on a visit to the sanatorium cannot understand Hans's infatuation with it. The "first effect of [the mountain air] was greatly to enhance illness to exuberant eruption, so to speak. . . .Had he never noticed that there is something exuberant about the eruption of illness, as if the body were celebrating?" The narrator's view is by no means certain, but Castorp's self-possession in the scene and his uncle's bewildered retreat (he arrives with confidence that he can take Castorp back with him to the flatlands and departs alone in haste) suggests the narrator's complicity with Castorp. Reading *The Magic Mountain* is like the experience of the patient who awaits the diagnosis of the doctor as he probes the body and listens for symptoms of disease. And it is, curiously enough, free of anxiety. Both the reader and the patient perversely do not want to have a clean bill of health, for illness as it turns out is a sign of vitality.

The concluding sentence about love rising up is suspect—and not simply for its sentimentality. The opposition between love and death in the last sentence is belied by the narrative, which identifies love with disease and death. Castorp falls passionately in love with Clavdia Chauchat, the fascinating "Asiatic" woman with the Kirghiz eyes. She embodies "the genius of illness," which confers upon her a "freedom" to be herself. Illness is not a misfortune that befalls Mme. Chauchat, but her very essence. "For she is a woman of genius," [Hans Castorp said], "and her husband has. . .granted her freedom to make use of her genius, either because he is very stupid or very intelligent, I cannot say, not knowing the fellow. In any case, it was wise of him, for it is her illness that confers such freedom on her, it is the genius of illness that she serves." In falling in love with her, Castorp must overcome a revulsion that he initially experiences from her bad manners (she slams the door on entering the dining room). And he can overcome it only when he accustoms himself to the sanatorium as the habitation of illness. Castorp not only has to accept the fact that he is ill (he resists the diagnosis in the early days of his visit), he has to experience it as a celebration of his body. The illness arouses his desire for Clavdia, whose presence makes him feverish. Mann is, of course, exploiting familiar knowledge about the erotic effects of tuberculosis. We know that the feverishness of the imaginations of Keats and Lawrence, for example, owed a great deal to their tubercular condition.

Illness, like everything else in the novel, becomes an idea. It figures prominently in the philosophical debates between Settembrini, the exponent of Enlightenment, and Naphta, the Jesuitical exponent of a paradoxical combination of medievalism and communism. As one might expect from an Enlightened reasoner, Settembrini views illness as a form of irrationality that

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can be cured and ultimately banished from the world. Health is the reason of the body.

> Illness is definitely not elegant, and certainly not venerable—such a view is itself a sickness, or leads to it. Perhaps I can best arouse your abhorrence of that idea by telling you that it is outdated and ugly. It comes from an era of superstitious contrition, when harmony and health were demeaned and distorted into caricature, a fearful era, when harmony and health were considered suspicious and devilish, whereas infirmity in those days was as good as a passport to heaven. Reason and enlightenment, however, have banished those shadows, which once lay encamped in the human soul. . . .

Castorp listens respectfully to Settembrini's eloquent speech ("a regular aria"), "both bewildered and abashed." In a sense, the argument is out of place, for it denies what is the pervasive condition of the scene of the novel—the illness, latent or manifest, of all its residents.

Settembrini's own condition belies the argument, confirming, as it were, its abstract and utopian character. (We know that Mann was settling scores with his brother Heinrich, a writer in the liberal Enlightenment tradition, in his satiric though not unaffectionate depiction of Settembrini. In "The Making of the Magic Mountain," his commentary on the novel appended to the Lowe-Porter translation, Mann speaks of Settembrini as "sometimes a mouthpiece for the author, but by no means the author himself." This sounds like a second thought about a character who seems more clown than spokesman for Mann's ideas.)

Naphta's affinity for illness alone would make him the more compelling figure. It is not simply a matter of who is right and who wrong, but the way the imagination of illness energizes argument, making it more interesting in its complication. To return man to a healthy nature is to dehumanize him and turn him into an animal. *Felix culpa.* To fall from grace is to fall into disease and death, a human condition.

> Illness was supremely human, Naphta immediately rebutted, because to be human was to be ill. Indeed, man was ill by nature, his illness was what made him human, and whoever sought to make him healthy and attempted to get him to make peace with nature, to "return to nature" (whereas he had never been natural). . .wanted nothing more than to dehumanize man and turn him into an animal. Humanity? Nobility? The Spirit was what distinguished man—a creature very much set apart from nature—from the rest of organic life. Therefore, the dignity and nobility of a man was based in the spirit, in illness. In a word,

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> the more ill a man was the more highly human a man was and the genius of illness was more human than that of health.

The Christian doctrine of humility is implicit in this affirmation of illness; the sick body is a confession of the body's mortality. Health only cultivates the illusion that we will live forever, effectively averting our gaze from the reality of death. In defending the Inquisition, Naphta implicitly draws an analogy between the use of torture to obtain a confession and illness as God and nature's way of obtaining an acknowledgment of the body's mortality. Naphta, less sympathetic than Settembrini, nevertheless wins the debate. Castorp in his thoughts while lost in the snow reluctantly concedes to Naphta: "You [Settembrini] are a windbag. . .you mean well . . . .I like you better, although [Naphta] is almost always right."

What accounts for Mann's fascination with disease? Naphta's argument, powerful as it is, is not the argument that Mann himself would make. There is no evidence that he would follow Naphta's Christian logic of the transcendence of suffering through suffering. Though the theme is not developed in the novel, there is the suggestion of a symbiosis between illness and creativity that would have appealed to Mann, the artist. "Any man who recognizes an organic symptom of illness to be the product of forbidden emotions that assume hysterical form in conscious psychic life also recognizes the creative power of the psyche in the material world." The healthy body, unconscious of itself, does not experience its own activity. Without errancy, it has no story to tell; like the state of innocence, health is the condition before the fall, before individuation and consciousness. It offers no challenge to the mind and the soul. It cannot lead to wisdom, which as the ancient Greeks knew comes through suffering. Settembrini's Enlightenment view doesn't even acknowledge sickness as a passage to a regained healthy state, a necessary memory of the susceptibility of even the healthy body. The Enlightenment will "have banished those shadows."

For Castorp as for Mann, the sanatorium at Davos is not so much a site of cure as it is a spectacle of illness and the variousness with which its patients experience it. The sanatorium for Castorp is the place that liberates illness from its repressed or denied condition in the "normal" life he leads in the flatlands. He breaks the rules of the sanatorium, visiting the other patients with a combination of compassion and curiosity. The ostensible reason for Castorp's visit is to see his cousin Joachim; the real reason is to discover himself or the fact that he is ill, which may be the same thing. Like Freud, Mann could respond to the question of what is man with the answer: "Man is a sick creature." And the discovery is attended with a sense of liberation, not dismay. Castorp revels in it. It becomes his bond with others.

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In *Intoxicated by My Illness,* Anatole Broyard writes of his affinity for *The Magic Mountain,* "the grand definitive romance of illness, a portrait that, I would say, speaking as a connoisseur now, will never be equaled. His description of life itself showed how precarious it was: 'a form-preserving instability, a fever of matter. . .the existence of the impossible-to-exist, of a half-sweet, half-painful balancing, or scarcely balancing, this restricted and feverish process of decay and renewal, upon the point of existence.'" For Broyard, dying is a creative, voluptuous, and even hilarious experience. Like Castorp in *The Magic Mountain,* he is filled with a perverse excitement at the discovery that he is ill, the condition for all sorts of discoveries about himself.

The novel has been read as a *Bildungsroman,* the sanatorium being a sort of university with a varied curriculum. Castorp becomes a student not only of Naphta and Settembrini, who is relentlessly described as a pedagogue, but of the Drs. Behrens and Krokowski, who represent different views of the relationship between the flesh and the spirit, body and soul or mind. (Behrens is a materialist, discovering causes in the soma, whereas Krokowski is a psychoanalytic idealist looking to the psyche for explanations.) The inarticulate but impressive Mynheer Peeperkorn and his lover Mme. Chauchat are teachers of Eros and feeling, a love for life beyond ideas. Castorp comes across as the eternal undergraduate who would prolong his stay indefinitely in the hermetically sealed world of the mountain, if it weren't for the war, which forces him to return to the flatlands, where he will presumably be educated in other ways.

This is a familiar and attractive reading of the novel, but I confess to sharing Jill Anne Kowalik's skepticism about the significance of Castorp's education. What does he learn from his mentors? As Kowalik remarks, he does not seem to achieve "an increase in moral consciousness." She also notes an absence of "acceptance and appreciation of the seriousness of suffering." If anything, in the climactic chapter "Snow" there seems to be a rejection of what he is being taught. "My two pedagogues! Their arguments and contradictions are nothing but *guzzabuglio,* the hubbub and alarm of battle, and no one whose head is a little clear and heart a little devout will let himself be dazed by that." The curriculum at Davos engenders confusion rather than clarity, which some would say is what a curriculum should do: create *guzzabuglio* (a favorite word in the novel, meaning mess or muddle) to unsettle the student in all his views. Whenever Castorp philosophizes on his own he deservedly encounters ridicule and not only from his philosophical mentors. Here is Castorp on love and death: "But irrational love is a mark of genius, because death, you see, is the principle of genius, the *res bina,* the *lapis philosophorum,* and it is also the pedagogic principle. For the love of death leads to the love of life and humanity. That is

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how it is. It came to me on my balcony, and I am delighted to be able to tell it to you." And Clavdia's response is definitive: "You are a silly philosopher, Hans Castorp." Did Mann mean to represent the mountain as the site of education or in effect to parody it? His famous irony makes it difficult to answer one way or the other. Mann suggests that "Hans Castorp would not have stayed with people up here even this long beyond his originally planned date of departure, if only some sort of satisfactory answer about the meaning and purpose of life had been supplied to his prosaic soul from out of the depths of time." He does stay, but it would be hard to say what he learns about the point and purpose of the business of living.

Castorp acquires a good deal of medical information about the body. He is exposed to the conflict of ideas, which he struggles without much success to relate to his own experience. The love affair with Mme. Chauchat is a brief episode that makes him feverish and provides him with a long memory. It is as hard to make sense of the charismatic effect of Peeperkorn on Castorp as it is difficult for Peeperkorn to express himself.

Castorp has the air of a serious student, an overachiever, if there was something to achieve. If he (and the reader) learn anything, it is that the ideas that occupy such a large space in the novel are untrustworthy and worse. Settembrini in particular provides no guide even for his own life. "Ah, this Settembrini—it was not for nothing he was a man of letters, grandson of a politician and son of a humanist! He had lofty ideas about emancipation and criticism—and chirruped at the girls in the street."

But the failure of ideas is not confined to Settembrini. In a memorable passage, Mann describes what happens to ideas as they develop in debate.

> "Form!" [Settembrini] said. And Naphta grandiloquently responded, "Logos!" But he who would not hear of the logos, said, "reason!" And the man of the logos defended "Passion!" Confusion reigned. "Objective reality," shouted one; "the self!" cried the other. Finally one side was talking about "Art!" and the other about "Criticism!" And both constantly returned to "Nature!" And "Spirit" and to which of them was more noble, and to the issue of "free aristocracy." But there was no clarity, no order, not even of a dualistic and militant sort, for it was all not only contradictory, but also topsy-turvy, and the disputants not only contradicted one another, but also themselves."

A veritable carnival! Mann is not simply indicating the intellectual incoherence of Settembrini and Naphta. His target is the character of ideas per se. Mann here performs like a deconstructionist *avant la lettre,* dramatizing the self-contradictoriness to which all ideas are susceptible.

In his foreword to *Women in Love,* D. H. Lawrence speaks of the strug-

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gle for verbal consciousness as "a very great part of life." "Any man of real individuality tries to know and to understand what is happening, even in himself, as he goes along." "Verbal consciousness" (Lawrence means by that phrase ideas that one has about oneself and the world) may be false as well as true. It should not be the "superimposition of a theory," but rather "the passionate struggle into conscious being." How do the ideas of Mann's characters measure up to the Lawrentian standard?

One certainly hears in the impassioned debates between Naphta and Settembrini the sounds of "passionate struggle." But they are not "strugg[ing] into conscious being." They have already achieved it—and their intellectual passion is, so to speak, the epiphenomenon of their achieved beings. Passion is partly in their beliefs and partly in their scorn for each other's views. For Lawrence, ideas must be tested by experience and therefore are open to refutation. Neither Settembrini nor Naphta tests ideas: they inhabit closed systems to be fought for and defended. If there is a testing, it is in the relatively open mind of Castorp, and presumably in the mind of the sensitive reader. Who then is in the right, Settembrini or Naphta? Neither—though, as I have already said, Naphta is the more compelling figure. Neither, because their ideas do not survive the test that the novel itself provides: the mortality of the body. Settembrini's Enlightenment optimism is useless against the facts of disease and death. The technological advances in medicine, which have effected so many cures (and in particular for the diseases that afflict patients of the Berghof sanatorium) do not confirm that optimism. The whole panoply of antibiotics, it appears, cannot ultimately outwit the cunning of viruses capable of transmuting themselves into even more formidable antagonists of the body. We in the developed world may have become healthier and longer lived, but there is still the ineluctable prospect of bodily deterioration and death. The future of mankind contains the proliferation of sanatoria for the elderly. Our defenses against disease and death may be only in degree more effective than our efforts to create lasting peace in the world.

Naphta may have come closer to surviving the test, because he embraces disease, suffering, and death, but he too is finally the captive of a faith that is immune to testing: the homeopathic belief that one can transcend suffering through suffering. Naphta's doctrine of suffering applies only to himself; it is a retrograde vision of the world, undesirable as an ideal and realizable only as oppression. It is finally the dream of the torturer and self-torturer. What would Naphta had made of modern totalitarian societies? It is at least a question of whether he would have found them congenial. As Alexander Nehamas remarks, both Naphta and Settembrini reject the "low, material or animal"—Settembrini in the name of reason, Naphta in the name of faith. The philosophies of both men lead away from reality or to a destructive

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vision of it.

Nothing is more telling against the moral authority of ideas than the brilliant penultimate chapter, "The Great Petulance," in which Naphta, insulted by Settembrini, challenges him to a duel. In the duel, Settembrini fires in the air, enraging Naphta, who calls out "coward" and turns his gun upon himself. The event deposes Reason, the very medium of ideas, from its pedestal above the fray and shows that in its most abstract manifestations, it "contains far more profound and radical possibilities for hatred, for categorical and irreconcilable hostility than are found in social life" and that in its very rigor it can lead "inexorably to bestial deeds." (The most devastating critique of Enlightenment Reason is made by the champion of the Enlightenment.) This is Settembrini's lesson to Castorp, and it effectively collapses the intellectual opposition between Naphta and Settembrini. It produces in Castorp an understanding that exceeds that of his mentor: "[Settembrini's] thoughts were not his thoughts—just as he would never have taken the notion to fight a duel on his own, but had only adopted it from Naphta, the little terrorist; they merely showed that he, too, was enveloped by the same inner state that had possession of them all—it had enslaved Herr Settembrini's beautiful reason, had made it its tool." The novel in effect concludes with an acknowledgment of the power of ideas to destroy rather than create. Rather than an alternative to violence (Reason's dream of itself), ideas are the source of violence. We should speak not only of the ineffectuality of Reason, but of its destructiveness. It is not fortuitous that the chapter that follows and concludes the novel, "Thunderbolt," gives us the scene of the Great War and Castorp's participation in it.

So we have the paradox of a novel of ideas which dramatizes their ineffectuality, or their destructive effectuality. They can neither explain nor transform the world. What is the attraction of these ideas? Ideas for the novelist do not have a life of their own. They do not exist, as they do for the philosopher, in an abstract space, free of "the genetic fallacy." "It is remarkable how a man cannot summarize his thoughts in even the most general way without betraying himself completely, without putting his whole self into it, quite unawares presenting as in allegory the basic themes and problems of his own existence." Ideas are a medium in which a character performs and reveals or conceals what he is. However confused the ideas may be, what emerges are characters who betray themselves in the expression and acting out of the ideas. Dostoyevsky was the master of the novel of ideas, because so much was at stake for his characters (Stavrogin, Kirilov, Ivan Karamazov, etc.) in their commitment to ideas. I would not make the same claim for Mann's characters.

Mann's interest in ideas has a strong theatrical element. Naphta, Settembrini, and to a lesser extent Behrens and Krokowski are performers of ideas. In his *Italian Journey* Goethe jests that the hospital could become

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the dominant institution of modern life. I imagine Mann, who regarded himself as Goethe's successor as Germany's greatest Man of Letters was aware of the prophesy. In any case, *The Magic Mountain* is in a sense a realization of the prophesy in a way that anticipates future realizations. The Berghof sanatorium is both a hospital and a theatrical spectacle, a scene of entertainment both for its residents and its readers. (In our time, Goethe's prophesy has been realized at the level of popular culture in TV dramas. "General Hospital," "ER," and "Chicago Hope" provide a kind of anesthetizing experience of bodily harm, not unlike the pleasures of violence in detective dramas.) The asthmatic attack of the hunchbacked Mexican is a hilarious performance: "he suddenly could not get his breath and would then grab his neighbor, man or woman, in the iron grip of one of his long hands, hold on tight as a vise, and drag his struggling, panicky victim, now shouting for help, down into the pool of dread with him." Or consider the director, Dr. Behrens's relishing the decomposing body:

> First of all, your guts burst. . .there you are lying on your wood shavings and sawdust, and the gases, you see, swell you up, blow you up until you're immense, the way frogs look when naughty boys blow air into them, until you're a regular balloon, and then your abdomen can no longer take the pressure and bursts. Bang! You relieve yourself noticeably. . .your bowels gush out. Yes, and after that you're actually socially acceptable again. If granted a holiday, you could visit your heirs without causing much offense. You stink yourself out, so to speak.

Symptoms of the mind, the ideas exuberantly celebrate its energy.

The scene of war that concludes the novel might have provided a genuine test of the seriousness of its ideas. But it does not. The terrible devastations of the Great War so graphically presented in Paul Fussell's *The Great War and Modern Memory* and Pat Barker's novels are given to us by Mann in a nostalgically heroic evocation.

> There are three thousand of them, so that they can be two thousand when they reach the hills and the valleys—that is the meaning of their numbers. They are a single body, so constructed that even after great losses it can act and triumph, even great its victory with a thousand-voiced hurrah—despite those who are severed from it and fall away.
>
> Youngsters with their backpacks and bayoneted rifles, with their filthy coats and boots—and in watching, one might also see with a humanistic, beatific eye, might dream of other scenes. One might imagine such a lad spurring a horse on or swimming in a bay, strolling the

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> shore with a girlfriend, his lips pressed to his gentle beloved's ear, or in happy friendship instructing another lad to string a bow. And instead there they all lie, noses in the fiery filth. That they do it with joy, and also with boundless fear and an unalterable longing for home, is both shameful and sublime, but surely no reason to bring them here to this.

This is the war told in a moment or two that deprives it of its reality, the kind of story he does not tell about the mountain. It is written from the vantage point of someone who stands upon a hill (a magic mountain?), observing and not participating—and observing in a very diminished sense of the word. He understands the need to deploy three thousand troops, because one thousand are sure to fall by the way. Literary memories of epic wars construct an image of a collective sense of triumph, despite the killing (no signs of torn limbs or entrails in the description), which even the heroically-minded Homer encompassed in his descriptions. The contrast between the scene of war and the idyll of the lad and his girlfriend (seen with "a beatific humanistic eye") is hardly sustained as a contrast; in reverting to the scene of war, the narrator insists that the soldiers lie, noses in the filth, with joy. Both idyll and war are scenes of joy. (Even if one hears the note of irony in the juxtaposition of joy and mud, it doesn't overcome the stronger lyric note in the passage.) Mann acknowledges the horror of war, but blurs it with aesthetic evocations of the glory of battle. There is a touch of what Primo Levi, characterizing certain writing about World War II, calls the "lechery of aestheticism." Such a compromised view of the war might explain Mann's complacent farewell to Hans Castorp: "Your chances are not good. The wicked dance in which you are caught up will last many a little sinful year yet, and we would not wager much that you will come out whole. To be honest, we are not really bothered about leaving the question open. Adventures in the flesh and spirit, which enhanced and heightened your ordinariness, allowed you to survive in the spirit what you will probably not survive in the flesh." Could the "adventures in the flesh and spirit" in the sanatorium possibly prepare Castorp for the devastations of the Great War? Those who survived the war, physically unharmed, were often spiritually destroyed. The war with its consequences for nations and humanity in general was not merely a staging ground for the progress of one particular soul.

Which returns us to the question of Mann's seriousness in representing disease and death. One doesn't have to be in a war to have the experience of being ravaged by a fatal illness. Rarely in the novel, however, do we get a sense of the terrible ravages of illness, of the devastating loneliness of death. We do get such a glimpse, more than a glimpse, in Joachim's death: not only in Joachim's admirable stoicism, but in his mother's and Hans's sense of loss.

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The main spirit of the novel I think is elsewhere—in a kind of theatrical display of symptoms, of the knowledge of the etiology of illness and of political, moral, and religious ideas. The magic mountain is an ivory tower of virtuosos, displaying their talents, sometimes pedantically, at other times brilliantly, but in a comic spirit. The contemptible Frau Stöhr may be close to the spirit of the novel in her unwitting puns, for instance when she mistakes "deceased" for "diseased" and "premises" for "primroses." Doesn't the novel itself identify disease with death? And doesn't one vacate the primroses in vacating the premises? Frau Stöhr gives us the comedy of the perishing body. Even Joachim, perhaps the most serious character in the novel, refuses to take life on the mountain seriously: "I sometimes think that illness and death aren't really serious matters, that it's all more like loafing around, and that strictly speaking, things are serious only down below in real life."

Reviewing *Death in Venice,* a young D. H. Lawrence (age twenty-four) saw the novella as a work at the end of a line. Mann was "the last sick sufferer from the complaint of Flaubert," resisting life's "disordered corruption" with "his fine aesthetic sense, his feeling for beauty, for perfection." Though *The Magic Mountain* does not contain an artist figure comparable to Aschenbach, it represents the bourgeois values that Aschenbach embodies before his "fall." The world of Mann's characters is an achieved world. The ideas that circulate in it represent forms of existence for which there is no real future. The irony of Settembrini's progressivism is that it has become an obsolete idea with no prospects, whereas Naphta's outlook is openly reactionary. The world of the novel is poised on the brink of disaster, and yet the narrative seems oddly insulated from it—as if Mann simply refuses to allow anything to disturb his equilibrium. Published in 1924, the novel comes across as a retrospective celebration of a world that had already passed away. Once upon a time. . . .

Mann's attraction to the Dionysian is evident throughout his work. We find it in the dream of the Bacchantes in *Death in Venice,* in the Walpurgisnacht in *The Magic Mountain,* and briefly in his evocations of the Great War. But his sensibility is Apollonian. He is the ironic master of extreme situations, experiencing danger at a safe distance. This reading of *The Magic Mountain* goes counter to its gravitas, though it is consistent with its irony. It is very much in the spirit of Mann's own comment upon his intention. "[The novel] was meant as a humorous companion-piece to *Death in Venice* [the work that immediately preceded it] and was to be about the same length: a sort of satire on the tragedy just finished. The atmosphere was to be that strange mixture of death and lightheadedness I found at Davos."

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KAREN WILKIN

Manet's Modernism

***M**anet's Modernism* is the final volume of Michael Fried's trilogy examining aesthetic desiderata and critical responses to French painting from the age of the Enlightenment to the early days of modernism—or as Fried more precisely describes it, "between the start of the reaction against the Rococo in the 1750s and the advent of Impressionism in the 1870s." Together, *Manet's Modernism*, along with the earlier *Absorption and Theatricality: Painting and Beholder in the Age of Diderot* and *Courbet's Realism*, constitute a highly individual, probing account of the evolution of French taste from the first official salon exhibitions to the scandals of the Salon des Refusés about a hundred years later, a period that Fried characterizes as the "prehistory of modernism." He defines his aim in the trilogy as an attempt "to give an account of this prehistory by making visible a hitherto unsuspected dynamic at its core." That dynamic, he argues persuasively, is the painter's shifting conception of the relationship of his painting to the beholder.

For Fried, this is a key issue. The elusive, hydra-headed question of the viewer's relation to the work of art not only drives all three of his ambitious studies of historical art, but has preoccupied him since the beginning of his career, as early as the 1960s when his writings on contemporary art first established him as a critic to be reckoned with; the young Fried's well known 1967 essay on minimalism, "Art and Objecthood," for example, hinges on the crucial relationship of the spectator to the work of art, and posits the notion of theatricality as a problematic condition.

Fried's point of departure is the usually unspoken assumption that a painting is made to be beheld. Though this might seem obvious—an inescapable condition of the nature of the beast—throughout the history of art, neither what the beholder wished to see nor his perception of what he was presented with remained immutable. Particularly during the "prehistory of modernism" dramatic alterations occurred in the complicated relationship between what the artist intended and what the viewer expect-

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ed (and understood) of what he saw. Fried's reading of the nature and meaning of these changes forms the basis of his ideas about the origins and evolution of modernism itself.

During the eighteenth century and well into the nineteenth, he reminds us, it was deemed necessary to maintain the fiction that the beholder of the work of art was an omniscient, invisible observer, like a member of a theater audience. The surface of the canvas was like the imaginary fourth wall of a conventional, naturalistic stage set, a transparent barrier that allowed the audience to see what was happening inside the proscenium while the actors apparently remained unaware of their presence. The people represented in a painting had to appear so completely absorbed by whatever they were engaged in that they were oblivious of the fact of being beheld. If they seemed to be aware of the beholder, the picture was seen as "theatrical"—a serious failing. The painted equivalent of the Brechtian character who disrupts a play's narrative to address the audience directly and comment on the action—who, in short, reminds us of the artifice of what we are seeing—would have been anathema to eighteenth and nineteenth-century critics. That Western art highly valued the painter's abilty to reproduce faithfully what was seen, which led to the use of models who deliberately presented themselves for scrutiny—that is to say, they *posed*, which is an essentially theatrical activity—is a paradox that gave rise to its own set of arguments over the years. Portraits, which assumed that the sitter agreed to display himself to the artist's gaze (and sometimes acknowledged the fact by staring back at the beholder), were an exceptional category, but the popularity of images of single figures seemingly absorbed in activities such as sewing or reading, among other kinds of work, suggests a powerful wish to sustain the fiction that the subject of the painting was somehow magically transubstantiated on to the canvas without being contaminated by observation.

Fried contends that Gustave Courbet's paintings radically transformed this traditional relationship of the work of art to the viewer. Courbet's effort, Fried asserts, was to collapse the distance between the painter—the first beholder—and his painting, through what he calls a "quasi-corporeal merger" of the painter and his work. It's the ultimate anti-theatrical stratagem, in which what Fried calls "the painter beholder" is absorbed by his own images—not literally, of course. In *Courbet's Realism*, Fried perceptively anatomizes repeated poses and habits of composition that he reads as metaphors for the painter's physical relationship to his painting while he is at work, facing the canvas with a palette in one hand, stabbing (or caressing) the surface with a brush held in the other. Fried goes further, interpreting these recurring poses and structures as embodiments of Courbet's desire (however unconscious) to paint himself *into* his picture.

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Edouard Manet, born in 1832, not only belonged to a later generation than Courbet, who lived from 1819 to 1877, but was a very different (and more complicated) artist whose "enterprise," in the currently fashionable term, was quite dissimilar. Unlike Courbet or any of his predecessors, who saw "absorptiveness" as an essential quality of significant art, Manet (to grossly oversimplify Fried's subtle and complex argument) sought to reveal everything—his sources, his relationship to the art of the past, his way of putting paint on canvas, his use of models, his active role as maker of the picture—in an effort to make his paintings more intense, without, however, resorting to "theatrical" strategies. Fried describes Manet's goals as "expressiveness, instantaneousness, and strikingness," and the pursuit of these qualities, which amounts to a reconstruction of the relationship of painting and beholder, Fried maintains, is what constitutes his modernism.

It is a very different reading of Manet, with very different implications for the interpretation of subsequent art, than the one that informs most discussions of this dazzling and perplexing artist. Perceptions of Manet as the first modernist painter usually emphasize his links with Impressionism, which, Fried insists, misses the point by ignoring Manet's relationship to the complicated state of French painting as it had evolved since the mid-eighteenth century. (This is not to deny that Manet had real, often close connections with the Impressionists, whom he obviously knew well, with whom he exhibited on occasion, and who recognized in him a kind of precursor, despite the differences in their aims.) As a corrective, Fried situates Manet not among the Impressionists, but among the artists who were his real contemporaries, the artists he terms "the generation of 1863"—the Impressionists were considerably younger—who included Henri Fantin-Latour, James McNeill Whistler, and Alphonse Legros. Fried's analysis of their work sets the stage for his discussion of Manet and establishes an illuminating context by examining what these artists shared in terms of their attitudes to the established aesthetic values of the period and their aspirations for their art; in addition, he examines in detail how their work was received. The penetrating discussion of Manet in the 1860s that follows underscores what this hard to classify painter had in common with his own generation at the same time that it leaves little doubt about what separated him from even the most inventive of his coevals. Fried's exploration of Manet's relationship to the art of the European past and to that of his younger colleagues, the Impressionists, further clarifies his individuality. Manet's desire to forge a "universal" art out of an astonishing range of inherited traditions, for example, is something that divides him irreconcilably from the Impressionists who, with some exceptions, notably Degas and Cézanne, preferred to found their art upon empirical experience, rather than drawing explicitly on paintings from the past. (Manet's use of multi-

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ple sources, his free and uninhibited allusions to other works of art, Fried is quick to point out, is not a kind of post-modernist appropriation *avant la lettre*, as some of Fried's colleagues would maintain; rather this practice is rooted in his aspiration for a "universal," achieved art that transcended national characteristics, a not uncommon notion in his day.)

Yet Fried also makes it plain that though his aims would seem to ally Manet more closely with such colleagues as Fantin and Legros, the sheer intensity, the "expressiveness, instantaneousness, and strikingness" of his work—which were noted even in his own day, even by hostile or baffled critics—separate him from the painters of his own generation. That intensity had its most evident equivalent in earlier "absorptive" art in portraits, in which the sitter acknowledged the act of being beheld, first by the painter and later by the painter's surrogate, the viewer. One of the most radical things about Manet's art—a crucial component of its modernism—Fried asserts, was his turning every aspect of the entire painting into a kind of portrait, whether the picture was a head, a single full-length figure, or the kind of ambitious, considered multiple figure composition that was traditionally dignified by the term "tableau." The result was not "absorptive," but neither was it theatrical, in the sense that the term had been understood more or less since Denis Diderot reported on the Salons of the eighteenth century. Yet it wholly transformed the presumably invisible beholder's leisurely experience of the "absorptive" picture into a new kind of direct, immediate confrontation with an object that looked back at him.

Fried sets himself a two-fold task: to reconstruct Manet's intentions in the 1860s when he painted *Olympia* and *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe*—among a host of extraordinary pictures that still look fresh and inventive more than a century later—and at the same time to understand just why these works so disturbed even the most well-informed observers of the day, just why they were so resistant to what Fried calls "available modes of intelligibility." In his pursuit of answers to these questions, he has closely read ("devoured and thoroughly digested" may be a more accurate phrase) the critical commentary of the period, so that *Manet's Modernism*, in addition to offering new insights into Fantin, Legros, Whistler, and Manet himself, provides a wonderful overview of some of the most interesting writing about art in France in the mid-nineteenth century. (*Absorption and Theatricality*, in the same way, was a superb introduction to Diderot's art criticism.) Fried quotes amply from articles by key observers of the 1860s, including Champfleury, Zacharie Astruc, Antonin Proust, Edmond Duranty, Théophile Thoré, Émile Zola, and the pseudonymous, surprisingly perceptive Capitaine Pompilius, whom Fried believes he has identified; the book's useful appendices reprint relevant, hard-to-find articles by Astruc, Duranty, Proust, and Le Capitaine Pompilius. Fried dissects

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what these commentators had to say about Manet's work, seizing upon phrases and choices of words that inadvertently reveal, perhaps more convincingly than direct declarations, just what they valued and what they regarded as the essential qualities of admirable works of art. The equation, for example, of Astruc's use of "penetrating" and "striking" with the opposing characteristics of works Fried characterizes, respectively, as "absorptive" and "anti-theatrical" is extremely persuasive.

The observations and conclusions of the writers of Manet's day are weighed against more recent interpretations. Not surprisingly, much of Fried's discussion of present day writing on Manet emphasizes its inadequacies rather than its merits, since he differs so sharply from most of his peers in his understanding of Manet's intentions and significance. (T. J. Clark's fascinating book *The Painting of Modern Life*, however, comes in for deserved praise.) But beyond this *pro forma* consideration of the current literature, which is, of course, obligatory in any serious critical text, *Manet's Modernism* is in a very real sense an extended piece of exultant, wholly scholarly self-vindication. The book begins with an essay initially published by Fried in 1969 (reprinted here with only minor changes), which examines the importance of Manet's allusions, particularly in his paintings of the 1860s, to a surprisingly large and wide-ranging set of works of art from the past. When it was first published, "Manet's Sources" was markedly different from the criticism Fried had already become known for—his cool, formalist discussions of the work of such contemporary abstract artists as Morris Louis, Kenneth Noland, Frank Stella, Jules Olitski, and Anthony Caro. Instead of dissecting the visible elements of wordless, economical paintings and sculptures that apparently referred to nothing but themselves and the history of their own making, "Manet's Sources" grappled with the extraordinarily difficult question of how Manet, an artist widely accepted as a harbinger of future directions, perceived by many as a radical modernist, could be so attached in such an obvious fashion to the past. The article was roundly denounced by Manet specialists at the time of its first publication, and as Fried puts it "both 'Manet's Sources' and I were widely regarded as left for dead." Fried's careful recreation of the ambience in which Manet worked in the 1860s, in his recent book, together with his scrupulous examination of the aesthetic values of the century preceding Manet's seminal years, in the first volumes of his trilogy, not only expand the points raised in "Manet's Sources," but offer an elegant justification of the accuracy of its original premise.

Like the two volumes that preceded it, *Manet's Modernism* is strenuous but ultimately exhilarating. Often brilliant, penetrating, and lucid, it is equally often opaque, hard to follow, and convoluted. Fried's prose can be exasperating. Phrases like "absorptive thematics" and "pictural matrix" lit-

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ter the landscape; we are forced to pick our way through sentences such as, "[b]ut for contemporary critics the issue of Courbet's Realism, like that of realism generally, was ideologically overdetermined in ways that foreclosed the possibility that his paintings might be seen in other than the most literal, positivist, and materialist terms," or "[n]othing better illustrates the particular historicity of Manet's endeavor in the first half of the 1860s than its dependence on the altogether contingent availability—as well as the equally contingent combinability—of those two 'foreign' representational technologies." But it's worth the effort. Growing in Fried's tangled underbrush of academic prose are patches of stunning insight, dazzlingly expressed. Discussing a pair of remarkable details in *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe*, the bullfinch "captured" in mid-flight and the rapidly stroked frog, Fried notes that both images are emblematic of speed, of what he calls "instantaneousness", one of "speed of *seeing*, capable of freezing the bird visually in flight" and the other of "speed of *rendering*, expressed in the dashing, calligraphic brushwork." But, he notes, the relationship (and therefore the implications) of these small, but significant elements in Manet's early, problematic masterpiece are more nuanced and richer than these observations suggest; "the juxtaposition of the two motifs in the *Déjeuner* insists on the mutual *entanglement* of eye and hand, seeing and rendering, as against any clear-cut distinction between them."

Such insights and occasional rapier turns of phrase leap off the page and make up for the effort of wading through Fried's far from straightforward explications of his reading of Manet. But what really redeems even the most turgid academic passages in *Manet's Modernism* is Fried's obvious dependence on passionate scrutiny of actual works of art in formulating his conclusions. I hope I do not compromise Fried's respected position in the academic world by pointing out that it is clear that he is stimulated and deeply moved by paintings and sculptures and that he spends time looking at them—long and hard—in the flesh. (One of the most eminent and inventive artists working today describes Fried as "*exciting* in the studio.") His meticulous examination of context, his analysis of aesthetic values, and his exploration of artists' and critics' intentions are all (unfashionably) informed not by an ideologically-based *parti pris*, but by things discovered during attentive, loving confrontations with works of actual art.

Ultimately, of course, Fried has set himself an impossible goal—to see Manet freshly, informed by the ideas, desires, and prejudices of the artist's own era, as those who saw him for the first time might have seen him. We know too much. Too much has happened since *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe* was first exhibited, too many alternative readings have been attached to Manet, and too many threads extracted from his work by subsequent artists. And as Fried himself points out, the model of the evolution of modernism

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posited by Clement Greenberg is both clear and powerful, with its emphasis on the gradual reduction of illusionistic pictorial space until the painting became all surface, a view seductively expressed in Greenberg's metaphor of the gradual "silting up" of space by the repetitive touches of Impressionism. But to see Manet's art only as prefiguring what happened after Impressionism, only as pointing to the future—to concentrate on the effect of his quest for "expressiveness, instantaneousness, and strikingness"—without taking into account his relationship to his precursors and his contemporaries, is both to underestimate and distort Manet's achievement.

Fried ends *Manet's Modernism* by attempting to sum up his own view of the painter of *Olympia* and *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe*. Typically, he sets his observations in the context of the pronouncements of some of Manet's admirers who wrote about him after his death at the age of fifty-one in 1883: Théophile Duret in the preface to the catalogue for the posthumous exhibition and sale of the contents of Manet's studio in 1884 and George Moore in an article written in 1898. Fried writes: ". . .without endorsing Duret's 'intrinsic quality of painting itself' (although as a young critic I embraced similar ideas), and without subscribing to the excesses of Moore's vision of Manet as involved only with quality (although standing before individual canvases I too have marveled at a touch that seemed to be concerned with nothing more), my continued stake in Manet rests importantly on the conviction that Manet's best paintings 'sustain comparison'—Duret's phrase seems exactly right—with those of the great painters who preceded him. To the extent that that belief became central to a certain reflection on painting only in the wake of Impressionism, the mind of this book remains divided."

It is possible to follow the course of modernism along a clear path that leads from Impressionism via Cézanne to Cubism and Matisse and then to a good deal of the abstract painting of the 1960s that Fried himself wrote about illuminatingly at the beginning of his career—abstract painting made a neat century after Manet painted some of his most radical pictures. Fried's new mapping presents us with an alternative route that leads up to and through the terrain of modernism, not across its flat plains, but up and down a lot of steep hills. It's hard work following this newly blazed trail, but the views are impressive and they offer genuinely fresh perspectives.

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On Camus

ALBERT CAMUS: A LIFE. By Olivier Todd. Alfred Knopf. $30.00

In 1996 the French publisher Gallimard brought out Olivier Todd's new biography of Albert Camus—an exhaustive not to say exhausting piece of work for a man of Camus' generation, or almost, with a fondness for reading in bed. And now, since Knopf has published what purports to be an English-language version of this opus by one Benjamin Ivry, I have been at pains to read all of Todd's eight hundred fifty-five pages including notes and an index. This will, I think, remain the "definitive" biography, although Todd modestly disclaims any such intention, citing the philosopher J. B. Pontalis to the effect that a hundred biographies are possible for any human being. And indeed, although his subject is an exceptionally rich human being, at once incessantly active and reflective, I cannot imagine anyone henceforth trying to make sense of Camus, from whatever viewpoint, without taking account of Todd's total immersion, since the story he distills is almost seamless, weaving in the notebooks, the correspondence, and his own recollections of the man, his friends, enemies, relatives; and the French culture wars of the Fifties.

Although much of this material was unavailable for an earlier biography of Camus, Herbert Lottman's, published by Doubleday in 1979, the latter still stands out among the myriad studies that have appeared since the postwar years as the best-informed and most insightful inquiry into Camus' life, as opposed to his work, and Todd loyally salutes the American historian in his foreword, proposing to emulate Lottman's pioneering work, he says, "without forgetting that Camus was first of all a writer" and pointing out that he would no longer be bound by the constraints of discretion imposed by the fact that Camus' wife, Francine, was still living when Lottman wrote his book. In other words, Camus' rather astounding career as a Don Juan—perhaps the proximate cause of Francine's suicidal depression in the early Fifties—could now be dealt with in detail, which Todd imperturbably does, eschewing the obvious opportunity for psychological speculation and moral comment, not to mention the sort of pop sociology that the French media *(in re* Mr. Clinton's alleged priapic adventures) are inflicting on us as I write these lines. (Despite his English patronymic and his studies at Cambridge, Olivier Todd is *seriously* French, and observes the decent discretion that is

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customary in highbrow circles in France). Furthermore, the novel on which Camus was at work when he died, *Le Premier Homme,* has now been published, and this is an indispensable key to the writer he felt he had not yet become.

In any event, thirty-five years after Camus died senselessly in a car crash, it was time to sort things out, and this is what Todd has so painstakingly and admirably accomplished, and more.

So much, alas, cannot be said for the English-language edition, published late last year by Knopf. This is an abridgement (by half) of Todd's book, woodenly written, albeit relieved here and there by involuntary humor, as when the translator attributes to Hubert Beuve-Méry, commenting on a statement Camus was reported to have made during a press conference in Sweden: "I was totally sure that Camus would say some fucking fool thing." The last three words of this sentence are meant to render the word *connerie,* meaning a foolishness, nothing more; an unwontedly strong word for the austere Beuve-Méry, to be sure, but putting the F-word in the mouth of the founder and director of *Le Monde* is *cocasse,* as the French say, as if a weary old Pope, instead of sending out his blessing *urbi et orbi* in Rome, were to proffer an obscenity and tell the people to get lost. A tiny detail, agreed, but my point is that presenting Todd's book in a sort of *Reader's Digest* condensation was a poor idea to begin with and the resulting miscarriage which Knopf now passes off as Todd's work is compounded by Ivry's lack of feel for it, or for nuance and texture in either language. The reader is advised to stick to the original; and if he hasn't enough French for it let him read Lottman, or, say, *War and Peace,* a book which haunted Camus as exemplifying the literary Art he was finally going to master as he withdrew from the madding crowd in Paris and the *civilisation de l'agenda,* as his friend Bloch-Michel called it, and settled down to work in the magnificent house he had acquired in Provence with the proceeds of the Nobel Prize, awarded in 1957.

The Nobel, gratifying as it was, filled him with a dismay almost akin to the breathlessness which afflicted him from time to time, inducing panic. The prestige of the prize and the financial freedom which came with it only increased the burden he carried. He was only forty-six, and catching sight of him in Paris around that time I had the impression that he looked stooped and rather haggard. Thin-skinned though he was, he could shrug off the malicious reactions of his political enemies, even of those which came from his former friends and comrades on the Left. But I suspect that Bernard Frank, with his subtle perspicacity and malicious humor, rather got to him when he suggested that the emperor simply had no clothes. "The critics are always expecting this man to come up with something," Frank wrote in *La Nef,* "but it's hopeless. . . .He graduates his effects. You couldn't hear his silence a few years ago, but it's become so noisy now that people are bound, finally, to get the point: *he's never written anything.*"

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O, sharper than a serpent's tooth! Todd tells us in a footnote that Frank later had second thoughts about this ferocious remark, but my own instinct is that—apart from the tone—it came rather close to Camus' own view of his career at that stage—too close, in any event, for comfort. The final chapter of Todd's book is the story of how Camus found his house in Lourmarin, in the Vaucluze, not far from his great friend the poet René Char, and set to work on his new book. Not exactly the first, *pace* Bernard Frank, but surely the one that would confirm his vocation and illuminate all the rest.

A professional literary artist, in Camus' view, is among other things a writer who recognizes no greater urgency and does not go whoring after strange gods as most of us do, for whatever reason; one whose work springs from what he called—in answer to a question about what the critics had failed to see in him—"the dark side, the part that is blind and instinctive in me." A revealing remark, one he had made before, in fact repeated in one form or another throughout his life—and utterly self-evident to the man who created *The Stranger*, the tortured narrator of *The Fall*, the Mediterranean sun-worshipper on the beaches around Algiers. He remained a passionate reader all his life, and critics will duly discover traces of Kafka in Meursault, of Dostoyevsky in Jean-Baptiste Clamence, of Gide in *Les Noces*, etc., but the fact remains that the works of Camus which "come off" best and most successfully—in terms of public acceptance, and in my view as well—were not those he wrote most laboriously, as a card-carrying French intellectual formed in the public schools of the Third Republic, but rather those he wrote at white heat, without the scholarly outlines and impedimenta he used in *The Myth of Sisyphus* and *The Rebel*—the philosophical essays which were intended to work out and define his positions in the peculiar atmosphere of occupied and postwar France, where the authentic *forts-en-thèmes*—Sartre & de Beauvoir & Co.—were setting the tone and formulating the questions in terms of German phenomenology, Marxism, and Stalinism. These glib and talented contemporaries now appear, on the whole, as an unmitigated if short-lived disaster for French culture, but no one who lived through that period can forget the enormous power they wielded, not only in Paris but throughout the western world. Nor can he fail to appreciate—as Todd does quite brilliantly as he traces the evolution of Camus' views on Communism and then on the Algerian question—the extraordinary courage, earnestness, and insight he brought to these issues; insisting all the while that he had neither the baggage nor the temperament of a philosopher or a political scientist and that his heart—if only the times were not so out of joint—was elsewhere.

Meaning where, exactly? I have already suggested that it was in a certain literary ambition; not just a literary career but the highest, the most overweening ambition. He had this *chutzpah* and it helped to give him that lofty

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air his enemies made such sport of, like a Brooklyn boy with an awful accent who wants to be Shakespeare, *at least,* and he preserved and nurtured it throughout all the years of journalism and the risks he took in the Resistance and as an editorialist at *Combat*, together with a stubborn sense of what was moral and what was not, and a growing helplessness as his country and his mother's, Algeria, was submerged in terror and by an idea of justice that he lacked the intellectual tools to refute. For all his indefatigable reading, he seems to have been unacquainted with the Scottish-English theoreticians of the civil society or with Hayek, say, or Popper in our time. He had been brought up in the left-wing Jacobinism of the French Left and the Federalist tradition remained foreign to him. For Algeria, in any event, the problem which concerned him most intimately, history had become a trap and it was too late—witness Raymond Aron, who was one of the first to urge the French simply to pack up and get out. So Camus' involvement in public affairs was like the threat of death which hung over him all his life, from the day he was diagnosed as tubercular as an adolescent—a sort of solution, on one hand, and a constant torment on the other, a relief from what he saw as his destined but oh-so-difficult lifework, and the prospect, the galling frustration, of defeat. Camus' deepest desire was to write novels, or at least One Great Novel. It was as simple as that. Not to tell the world how to face the fact that we are adrift in a world without God and without meaning, as he tried to do in *The Myth of Sisyphus*; or to write a guide for the perplexed in the face of the ideologists—from Sartre to Foucault—who despised their bourgeois families and called for the destruction of the civilization and inherited moral order to which he (much like an American of immigrant or "hardhat" background) had acceded with such difficulty. His answer to the sentence that hovered over him and to the distractions imposed upon him by his circumstances was to write—at long last—the Book which would encompass his time and establish—at long last—who he was.

Hardly a novel ambition, one might say—and of course one would be right, but it had a special poignancy in Camus' case because he was so constantly haunted by the idea that in the absence of this achievement his entire life, all the books and plays he had written, for which he had received the plaudits not only of the public but of his peers, would be, in fact *was,* nothing but a fraud—or a *Misunderstanding*, to quote the title of the play which he had been carrying about with him for years and finally produced elaborately with a stellar cast in one of the premier theaters of Paris, only to see it hissed off the stage. For once, at least, there was no misunderstanding; the mistaken identity which leads to the death of the play's hero is badly contrived and *obviously* fails to work—as if Camus were too entranced by his inner problem to see what is so clear to the public, the actors, and everyone else.

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And yet he was filled with hope when he took possession of his new house in Lourmarin—a remodeled silk farm still faintly informed with the odors of wax and mold and set in a country wonderfully evocative of his native land. He would keep a place in Paris; and his endless love affairs and preoccupation with the theatre would tempt him to move about rather more than he should; but the first draft of *Le Premier Homme* was bourgeoning and, towards the end of November, he gave himself eight months to finish it, although he would have to make one brief trip to Paris in early January.

On November 22 he wrote to his young Danish lover, whom Todd discreetly calls "Mi": "I have never had such dense material to work with and this afternoon I had the fleeting impression that my characters were taking on this density and that for the first time in the twenty years that I've been searching and working I was finally breaking through to the truth of art. It's like a delightful bolt to the heart, but a fleeting one, and then back to blind work and constant doubt." His letters at this point are filled with this sort of thing: it's a terrible grind, he keeps saying, but he is proud and glad to be on his way. In short, he was sleepwalking again, as when years before he had written *Les Noces* or *The Stranger* or *The Fall* with no very clear idea of where he was going but moved by an instinct for life and a sheer love of it. And despite the arrival of Francine and their twins he kept at it, "at full throttle," he says in a curious little note he jotted in his journal. "Sown by the wind, harvested by the wind, and a creator nevertheless—such is man through the ages, and proud to be alive, however briefly"—until the morning of January 3, when he drove off towards Paris in Michel Gallimard's car.

According to Lottman, who covers the circumstances of this painful business more thoroughly than Todd, perhaps because the latter was exhausted by then, the uncompleted first draft of *The First Man* ran to one hundred forty-five closely written manuscript pages, some eighty-thousand words. Lottman could not foresee that Camus' daughter Catherine would publish this text one day. Nor could I. But now that it is possible to read these pages, it is clear that this was the right thing to do. The manuscript is still rough-hewn and awkward in places but remarkably compelling, especially the chapters on Camus' poverty-stricken childhood in Belcourt, a slummy quarter of Algiers which—when I first saw it during World War II—reminded me of the East Side of New York or the Third Ward of Newark, New Jersey. Or perhaps the analogy came home to me later, when I learned more about this man, his mother and their circumstances. You don't have to be a literary artist to walk in your sleep. In any event, when I was asked to review yet another biography of Catherine's father about fifteen years ago, before those chapters were available, it seemed natural to call my piece "Brother Camus".

H. J. KAPLAN

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The Book of Job

AMERICAN PASTORAL. By Philip Roth. Houghton Mifflin. $26.00

It may be too early to say that Philip Roth has exhausted his interest in Nathan Zuckerman, the ubiquitous writer-hero of many of his previous fictions. Zuckerman is the narrator of *American Pastoral*, but early in the novel he virtually disappears into the consciousness of its main character Seymour "Swede" Levov. For readers of Roth, Swede as hero may be a surprise: a handsome, athletic, successful business man, with a solid, respectable, and generous character. Roth has accustomed us to characters of extreme disposition, sexual virtuosos, irreverent jokers, deconstructors of comforting pieties. A provocateur par excellence throughout his brilliant career, Roth unsettles us again by reversing field and giving us what we would least expect from him: a deeply sympathetic treatment of a man with all the middle class virtues. The reversal is all the more extraordinary, coming after, as it does, his most "nihilistic" novel, *Sabbath's Theater*.

A famous high school athlete, son of a successful glove manufacturer, and married to Miss New Jersey of 1949, Swede has it made. Though Swede is a maker and a doer, the way has been prepared for him by his father, the founder of Newark Maid Gloves. "Rough-hewn" and "undereducated," "limited. . .with unlimited energy," Lou Levov dominates every scene in which he appears with his strong opinions and biases. He bequeaths his confidence and energy, but the rougher edges of the father have been smoothed to a comfortable blandness in the son. Nothing stands in Swede's way of living the American dream until the explosion. His daughter, ironically named Merry, sets off a bomb that destroys a store and kills its owner. She is responsible for three more deaths as well. The time is the sixties, the time of Vietnam, the civil rights movement, the Black Panthers, the Weathermen, the Newark riots. The novel is an impassioned and baffled meditation on what used to be called the problem of evil: how could the benign Swede and his beautiful wife, Dawn, have produced the monstrous Merry?

The question is of course rhetorical. The novel doesn't answer the question. There is a psychoanalytic explanation in the novel that can't be taken seriously (I'm sure Roth doesn't take it seriously). Merry is a stutterer, who finds release in the bombing, after which she becomes completely fluent in her speech. (More convincing is the speculation about the cause of the stuttering. "Maybe that was what lay behind the stutter, all those words she uncannily knew before other kids could pronounce their names, the emotional overload of a vocabulary that included even 'I'm lonesome.') There is

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really no explanation for Merry, though lots of reasons she gives for her hatred of the middle class lives of her parents. As Merry and her cohort see it, Vietnam, racism, and exploitation of the poor have their source in the hypocritical virtues of her parents. The actual motive for terror remains obscure.

There were of course Merry Levovs in the sixties; they represented the extreme of the peace movement. Their physical violence manifested itself at times in the rhetoric of its more peaceable mainstream participants. They were its oxymoron, so to speak, throwing bombs for peace. Merry undergoes a conversion at the end. She becomes an ascetic in revulsion from killing. She is reduced to filth, avoiding cleanliness from fear of harming the microscopic creatures that inhabit water. From one extreme to another, Merry is a one dimensional character, little more than an occasion to display the consciousness of Swede Levov, where the real "action" of the novel is. Roth withholds his imagination of Merry's counterlife. Like her parents, we are always guessing what she is about. We are never inside her head. Since Roth is a master at presenting counterlives, that is, giving us his world from conflicting perspectives, we may wonder why he doesn't get inside Merry's head. The effect of doing so would be to displace the focus from her father's bewilderment where the novelist wants it to be.

Roth may have reversed fields, but he has not changed direction. The publicity that accompanies *American Pastoral* says that having explored the human need "to demolish, to challenge, to oppose, to pull apart. . .[Roth] now focuses on the counterforce: the longing for an ordinary life." This is not quite right. Certainly Swede, who has had an ordinary life, longs in vain for its return. But the writer, whether Zuckerman or Roth, has something else in mind.

> [Swede] invoked in me, when I was a boy—as he did in hundreds of other boys—the strongest fantasy of being someone else. But to wish oneself into another's glory, as boy or as man, is an impossibility. . .on aesthetic grounds if you are a writer. To embrace your hero in his destruction, however—to let your hero's life occur within you when everything is trying to diminish him, to imagine yourself not in his mindless ascendancy, when he is the fixed point of your adulation, but in the bewilderment of his tragic fall—well, that's worth thinking about.

Zuckerman is telling us that the writer to whom very little happens in his life (he resides alone in Connecticut and sees hardly anyone) lives in the imagination of error, loss, defeat, and disintegration of the characters of his creation.

Swede Levov is a type, already anticipated in *Sabbath's Theater* in the character of Norman Cowan, "a nice guy with some depth." Attractive, intelligent, and considerate, Norman is an irresistible target to the perverse

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Sabbath, who not only tries to seduce his friend's susceptible wife, but insists on telling him. "But how do you plan to kill her? When you find out she is fucking your best friend." In a sense, Merry's bomb is intended to have the same effect on her father that Sabbath's obscene aggressiveness has on his friend. Norman's reasonable response is: "What the hell has become of your mind? . . .This is awful." Since we are mostly in Sabbath's mind in the course of the novel, the friend's sweet reason does not prevail. It is much less interesting than the awful extremity of Sabbath's mind. In *American Pastoral*, Merry is like Sabbath only in her effect on her father's Norman-like reasonableness. Merry is little more than an ideological stereotype, whereas Sabbath is an antinomian genius. We are told that Merry is very intelligent, but the novel provides little evidence of it. Instead we hear her mouthing the radical clichés of the sixties with the conviction of her hatred of her family. We can't but sympathize with her family, her father in particular, at the same time that we know that he has been living in the fool's paradise of the American dream.

The obsessive focus of the novel is the relationship between parent and child, father and daughter: the estrangement (an extreme case of it) that a parent often feels as the child emerges into independence or the illusion of it. Even if it does not become the scandal that Levov experiences (the fierce unrelenting hatred his daughter feels for him makes him the symbolic target of the bomb), there is in every well-meaning parent who has suffered such estrangement the unspeakable pain of incomprehension of how this could be. The parent may feel he has produced a genetic mutation. Could this be my child? Roth superbly captures the oscillations between guilt and resentment that consume Swede's life, the utter pain in losing a child in life. Inevitably, there is a certain tedium about having to endure the concentrated attention to the mind of a character as limited in his understanding and self-understanding as Swede—especially in his unrelenting incomprehension, guilt, and resentment. But the tedium is not simply a function of Swede's limitations. Grief of the kind experienced by Swede is the endless repetition of these feelings. It is the rare person who doesn't find his capacity for sympathy taxed by the spectacle of the endless suffering of even a close friend.

What interests Roth above all is the law of entropy in human life, the precarious and futile attempts by which we try to maintain its stabilities. There is, of course, the "breakdown of the body," when Swede finds his daughter reduced to a lumpen state, emaciated and filthy. "Her foulness had reached him. She is disgusting. His daughter is a human mess stinking of human waste. Her smell is the smell of everything organic breaking down." Virtues, the stuff of which character in its honorific sense is made, turn out to be pastoral illusions. Swede, who seems to be the rare exception to the

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general run of humanity, observes with astonishment "how people seemed to run out of their own being, run out of whatever the stuff was that made them who they were and, drained of themselves, turn into the sort of people they would have felt sorry for. It was as though while their lives were rich and full they were secretly sick of themselves and couldn't wait to dispose of their sanity and their health and all sense of proportion so as to get down to that other self, the *true* self, who was a wholly deluded fuckup." Zuckerman has not disappeared from the novel. He has conferred upon Swede his own superior writer's understanding. This is a cheerless permutation on the ludic conception of self in *The Counterlife* in which Zuckerman declares that there is no self, except perhaps in the impulse to impersonate. "If there even *is* a natural being, an irreducible self, it is rather small, I think, and may have been the root of all impersonation, the innate capacity to impersonate." The self in *The Counterlife* becomes a "troupe of players. . .a permanent company of actors that I can call upon when a self is required."

The "true self" in Roth's latest novel is in the dissolution of the illusory fullness of our beings. Swede may be an exception (an "abnormality, a stranger from real life *because* of his being so sturdily rooted"), but even the strongest oak cannot withstand a high intensity hurricane. In a splendid passage, Swede explains the glove-making process to a messenger from his fugitive daughter. (Roth's description of glove making is a virtuoso performance.) In the course of the explanation, he becomes suddenly possessed by the enormity of what has befallen him and the glove making turns into an incantation of grief with echoes of the book of Job.

> This is called a polishing machine and this is called a stretcher and you are called honey and I am called Daddy and this is called morning and this is called hell, pure hell, and you have to have strong ties to be able to stick it out, this is called trying-to-go-as-though-nothing-has-happened and this is called paying-the-full-price but-in-God's name-for-what, this is called wanting-to-be-dead-and-wanting-to-find-her-and-to-kill-her-and-to-save-her-from-whatever-she-is-going-through-wherever-on-earth-she-may-be-at-this-moment, this unbridled out-pouring is called blotting-out-everything *and it does not work, I am half insane, the shattering force of that bomb is too great.*

In contemporary America, there are false comforters, but no Voice Out of the Whirlwind to match Swede's Job-like eloquence. Nor are the losses restored. Roth's sympathy is with Swede (the rooted oak), but his imaginative fascination is where it has always been: the spectacle (pathetic and comic) of our disintegration.

EUGENE GOODHEART

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End of an Era

At a Century's Ending: Reflections 1982-1995. By George F. Kennan. W.W. Norton. $27.50

The ideas and personality of George F. Kennan have long exercised a curious fascination for me. I have been impressed by intimations of wisdom, a quality of integrity, thoughtfulness, and depth, but I also found some of his ideas idiosyncratic and he seemed unaccountably harsh on his own society and strangely non-judgmental about its major adversary, the former Soviet Union.

Kennan's ideas have not been easy to fit into any available mold or pattern. His presence in American public and intellectual life has combined, at various times, the roles of diplomat, scholar, social critic, and doomsday prophet. He is the rare critic of American institutions and foreign policy who has not been tempted to idealize other social-political systems, past or contemporary, nor has he been inclined to join the more recent "multiculturalist" critiques of America and the West. If anything he has been critical of the U.S. for not living up to the best ideals and ideas of Western culture.

Kennan moved from advocating the containment of what he clearly saw at the time as an evil empire, (never mind the terminology) to lamenting Western military and political movements to stem the tide of Soviet expansionism and to advocating renewed efforts to understand and respect the all too human rulers of the Soviet Union ("... flesh and blood people like us—misguided if you will but no more guilty than we are of circumstances into which we all were born—and they, like us, are simply trying to make the best of it.") He used to be highly *critical* of the perception of the Soviet leaders as "a group of men. . .dominating and misruling a large part of the world" and of the idea that their "thirst for power" played an important part in their motivation and behavior. Admittedly Kennan's shifts of opinion were accompanied by substantial internal changes in the Soviet Union, though not in its foreign policies, or if there were, not necessarily for the better from the Western point of view. Kennan repeatedly warned that an overly *critical* stance toward the Soviet Union increased the risk of nuclear war: "democratization must wait; world peace cannot," he wrote in 1983.

It is strange to read a book that revolves largely around Soviet affairs and which, for the most part, was written before the disintegration of the

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Soviet empire. Of the thirty-eight pieces, only five were written in 1991; of these only three have bearing on Soviet-Russian topics. The volume is divided into five sections entitled "Background," "Cold War in Full Bloom," "Cold War, Its Decline and Fall," "Reviews and Introductions," and "Miscellaneous." Apparently Kennan did not give high priority to the decay and disintegration of the Soviet Union or to a concerted effort to inquire into their causes and circumstances; rather, he seems hardly surprised by these events, as if he had taken for granted the demise of the Soviet Union. At the same time these, as well as his earlier writings, suggest that *before* the collapse he took for granted the persistence of the Soviet system in spite of his well founded awareness of its many vulnerabilities.

Many ideas and preoccupations in this volume, unavoidably, will strike the reader as obsolete or all too familiar: haunting fear of nuclear war, American misperceptions of the Soviet Union, repeated advice to American leaders and politicians not to be judgmental of and confrontational toward the Soviet Union, the belief that Soviet leaders were not significantly different from Western politicians, and the theme of moral equivalence between the West (and especially the United States) and the Soviet Union. In a 1982 address, Kennan urges Americans to learn "to see both the Soviet leadership and the Soviet people, and ourselves as we really are—as God's creatures, embodying both good and bad. . . ." Such a statement does not lead to the pursuit of a differentiated understanding of historical events and actors.

There also are familiar pleadings "for a greater humility in our national outlook" and the curious belief that if the United States mastered its domestic social problems it would no longer need to spend vast amounts of money on armaments. Kennan's critiques of U.S. foreign policy have not been confirmed by the course of events. Contrary to his misgivings it was the Reagan administration that improved the relationship with the Soviet Union under Gorbachev, who after all did not conclude that he could expect nothing but "a total, blind and almost dead hostility" from the U.S. Nor was Kennan's apprehension about the Soviet leaders' "get[ting] their backs up" in the face of Western military and political pressure justified. He firmly believed that a major task of Western governments was to make the Soviet rulers feel less insecure, less threatened; the more secure and successful Soviet leaders felt the easier it would be for the West to live with them; such a sense of security would also make them more liberal at home. In fact, the unravelling of the Soviet empire was greatly accelerated by the defeat in Afghanistan, by the strains of the arms race and the growing domestic disarray, and the insecurity and uncertainty of the leaders desperate enough to try even *glasnost*. It was an insecure Soviet leadership that

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pulled out of Afghanistan, decided to give up its East European dependencies, and allowed the greater domestic freedoms which, contrary to its hopes, doomed the system. Kennan's notions of how the Soviet Union could become more tolerant did not seem to be supported by the familiar historical events.

Events in the former Soviet Union did not lend substance to Kennan's belief that "if what we want to achieve is liberalization of the political regime in the Soviet Union, then it is to example rather than to precept we must look; and we could start by tackling. . .some of the glaring deficiencies in our own society." While few of us could question the existence of these deficiencies their relevance to the liberalization of the Soviet system always was negligible.

Kennan treats the impending collapse of the Soviet Union, and the causes and circumstances of the collapse, in an almost cursory, matter-of-fact fashion. Although he did not predict this collapse, many of his earlier assessments could have anticipated it, in particular the theme that Soviet rulers were justifiably insecure, presiding as they did over an essentially weak system. But perhaps the total and rapid unravelling of the Soviet Union was not an idea especially close to Kennan's heart given his misgivings about the wisdom of American foreign policy and leadership; he might not have cherished the prospect of a world dominated by one superpower he has always viewed with considerable ambivalence. It is also possible that because of his more recent and far greater preoccupation with decline and decadence in American society he overlooked how far Soviet society had decayed, including its moral glue.

This is not to say that Kennan did not have "strong premonitions of impending change in Russia." He observes correctly (in one of the few parts of the book devoted to the collapse) that "the ideology inherited from Lenin was no longer really there to support this system. It remained as a lifeless orthodoxy. . . ." And he lays much blame on the Soviet economy and especially its overcentralization and the lack of incentives.

Given Kennan's credentials as a critic of U.S. foreign policy his observations about the origins of the Cold War are noteworthy and should give little comfort to the unrepentant Cold War revisionists committed to the belief in America's overwhelming responsibility. In one of his 1985 essays Kennan writes of his efforts after World War II "to persuade Washington that dreams of a happy collaboration with this regime are quite unreal. . . that Stalin and his associates are now elated with their recent military and political successes and think they see favorable prospects for extending their political influence over all of Europe. . . ."

On the other hand to insist, as he does, that "nobody 'won' the Cold War" is a questionable proposition. After all, the Soviet Union did not sur-

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vive its end; the U.S. did; countries under Soviet control or influence reverted to autonomy or independence, including most of the Soviet nationalities; and official Soviet ideology and institutional arrangements became further and probably definitively discredited.

A key to understanding Kennan's views might be found in his assessment of American society and culture: his critical sentiments about his own country, its leaders and culture, are locked, as it were, in a conflict with his insights into the Soviet system and his knowledge of Russian history. He remains haunted by apprehensions of American arrogance or a sense of superiority; most likely what he appreciated in the Soviet Union were the remnants of a pre-Soviet and pre-modern Russian past, the sturdy and simple traditions long extinct in his own country.

In this volume (as in his other writings) one occasionally glimpses his sense of the outsider, the feeling of being "remote" from the people he used to observe on the streets of Moscow and, one would suspect, also from those in the corridors of power in Washington, D.C. Perhaps it is this sense of remoteness and dignified detachment that may in some complicated way account for both the strengths and weaknesses of his view of the world, including American-Soviet relations of the past.

PAUL HOLLANDER

Poetry After Auschwitz

FUGITIVE PIECES. By Anne Michaels. Knopf. $23.00

A Jewish boy of seven, his parents murdered in their home by the S.S. perhaps, perhaps only by neighbors, his beautiful sister perhaps taken away to be raped and murdered, is left alone to flee, hide, starve, despair.

"Perhaps" is pertinent to *Fugitive Pieces*, a work that avoids dwelling on Holocaust facts—perhaps to spare the reader, perhaps to allow characters their transcendence of those facts. Perhaps this is the way second-generation writers (or is it by now third-? or fourth-?) need to construct their Holocaust fictions. Perhaps they sense that Holocaust words, like Holocaust numbers, no longer have the power to seize and crush us.

The substance of Anne Michaels' novel is rendered through the sensibility of the traumatized boy, Jakob, who later records meditations on events in

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his journal. After the destruction of his mother, father, and sister, Bella, Jakob flees to the ancient bogs of Biskupin and sinks himself into clay with the fossils, until one day he sees a lone digger.

Here is the electrifying start of their encounter: "I limped toward him, stiff as a golem, clay tight behind my knees. . . .So hungry. I screamed into the silence the only phrase I knew in more than one language, I screamed it in Polish and German and Yiddish, thumping my fists on my own chest: dirty Jew, dirty Jew, dirty Jew."

The digger is Athos, a Greek archeologist-geologist. Athos hides the boy under his clothes and takes him to his home on the island of Zakynthos. There they embark on the adventure of survival together, despite invader Germans.

Athos says: "I will be your koumbaros, your godfather, the marriage sponsor for you and your sons. . . .We must carry each other. If we don't have this, what are we?"

Athos is true to his promise. Though the time on the Greek island is haunted by grief, it is also an astonishingly tender, beautifully realized idyll. Under Athos' tutoring, Jakob learns plants, stones, stars, the sea, the ancient myths. When Jakob, who had been shattered into muteness, learns to speak again, it is in the language of poetry, of English and Greek.

The fifty-year-old Athos turns out to be as great an exile from life as seven-year-old Jakob. Athos possesses the gift of extracting poetry from the natural world, and the bereft boy finds solace there, turns to it in his grief and believes it responds to him: "Alone on the roof those nights. . . . I felt compassion for the stars themselves. Aching towards us for millennia though we are blind to their signals until it's too late, starlight only the white breath of an old cry."

So Jakob the orphan is rescued by Athos, who seems to the boy like a god from the sea itself. And the boy in turn brings life-giving delight to his rescuer, the grieving, isolated man whose lover has died and who is in any case in love with the past and in recoil from the barbaric present.

Anne Michaels' compassionate and empathic first novel thus recounts how an old man and a boy save one another from the horrors of their time. She is a Canadian whose two previous books are prize-winning poetry collections. The interior life she creates for the brutalized boy who is at heart a poet converts horror-numbed sensations into the sensuality of landscape, earth's and heaven's: "If a chip of stone radiates its self, its breath, so long, how stubborn might be the soul."

Aharon Appelfeld writes in one of his essays that the only authentic eye with which to view the Holocaust is the child's; the child has no other life to mediate what it sees. Appelfeld himself manages to keep his novels framed inside the shock. His characters remain, if not children, then as unrecognizing

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of the world as children are: grownups who never cease being deranged, detached, derailed. And certainly this approach works beautifully for Jakob when he is a child locked into trauma to which the only key is poetry.

Poetic language and imagery invent a rich interior life for a half-dead boy who is ecstatically reborn during the time he lives on the Greek island with Athos. But then Athos and Jakob leave Zakynthos and move to Canada. Mundane life begins. The boy who has been soaking in the poetry of his own becoming must now be. He is the poet and translator Jakob Beer out in the world. In Canada, Jakob continues to be shrouded in remoteness and philosophic meditation without the magic of transformation. The move to Canada seems no more than a blip of biography. Though he marries a lively young woman, little of the experience pierces him. He muses: "The poet moves from life to language, the translator moves from language to life; both, like the immigrant, try to identify the invisible, what's between the lines, the mysterious implications."

But the mysterious implications are far fewer in Canada. Jakob marries the highly inappropriate Alex, who goes out with "the kids," "the cats," "the crowd."

The price paid for keeping Jakob in the realm of meditation is that he retreats from us as a character. He is disembodied consciousness, symbol of our longing to transcend twentieth-century suffering. Paradoxically, this weakness reinforces the author's novelistic frame, which is that Jakob's meditations are culled from Jakob Beer's journals, discovered after his death. Why, we ask ourselves, must Athos and Jakob move to Canada? Surely not for novelistic reasons. For matters of record, then: Jakob Beer's real life must have gone that way. The important events of the novel should be sought in the dazzle of its language. Jakob meets his love, Michaela, and he meets Ben, himself the son of Holocaust survivors (it's not always easy to sleuth out details of sequence: even the jacket copy shares the author's shying from the explicit). Ben, who is fated to find Jakob Beer's journals, is deeply touched by the poet-translator. Freed from his family's muteness, Ben is able to give his own first-person account of being locked into speechless suffering: "There was no energy of a narrative in my family, not even the fervour of an elegy. Instead, our words drifted away, as if our home were open to the elements and we were forever whispering into a strong wind."

All that is changed through Jakob's poetry. But again there is a price to be paid. Poetry saves these lives, but poetry can't do all that much for the parts of a novel that have to make their far clumsier way through time and space. Though time passes, there is little sense in the book of time *building*, in that sturdy yet breathtaking house-of-cards way that belongs to the novel alone. There is, instead, recapitulation. Ben, a meteorologist, again reads the world through nature, wind-whipped and breeze-burnished. The

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meditations of Ben are not always distinguishable from the meditations of Jakob, and Ben's experience recapitulates Jakob's. Each woman, including Ben's wife, Naomi, is abstract enough to resemble the others, with one language for erotic experience.

Yet throughout, poetic insights, aphorisms, parables, meditative koans spill like rare fruits from a cornucopia. Some allude to the old Holocaust conundrum: Who can respond with forgiveness to the perpetrators of the Holocaust?

Here is an answering fable: A rabbi dressed like a peasant is insulted in a train. When they leave the train, the insulter learns the rabbi's true identity and begs forgiveness. The rabbi answers: "Ask the man in the train to forgive you."

How could the Germans have ignored the humanity of the Jews by turning them into the inanimate *figuren?*

In fact they couldn't, and for that reason, in sadistic rage, they exerted all their efforts to humiliate them, precisely as human beings.

How can we mourn as deep and long as events require and still go on with life? The aphorism comes back: *To remain with the dead is to abandon them.* And Jakob's voice continues, "All the years I felt Bella entreating me, filled with her loneliness. I was mistaken. I have misunderstood her signals. Like other ghosts, she whispers; not for me to join her, but so that, when I'm close enough, she can push me back into the world."

Sensitive to the implications of her own efforts, the author writes, through the persona of her poet, Jakob Beer, "Forgive this blasphemy, of choosing philosophy over the brutalism of fact."

One brutalism of fact, the child Jakob's tragic outcry of "dirty Jew," is never re-addressed or recalled. Only the timeless stones of Greece, the clear heroic light of the Greek isles, engender Jakob's liberation. For all his meditating, Jakob does not so much reclaim the Jewish boy from the dirt as he springs up in his place, a Greek philosopher-poet.

Michaels' book reminds us indirectly of what must surely be known to her. The philosopher Adorno said that there could be no lyric poetry after Auschwitz. Michaels has made the necessity of lyric poetry the subject of her novel. She has written lyric prose and made her novel which is not quite a novel the closest thing to poetry she could manage, a tone poem.

Jakob when young is healed by Athos' teaching of Greek poetry and by becoming a poet. Ben is healed by the poetry of Jakob, healed in the sense that his own poetic sensibility is released, along with language for his family's pain-filled experience. And Jakob is healed again by the touch of a younger man who has been touched by him, as well as by the love of a younger woman.

All this is carried through in iridescent waves of words that bring pleasure to the reader. Is it ungrateful for me to think that somehow, the more

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we make heroic passes at the Holocaust with high-colored language, the more we resemble the matador flirting his bright cape before the bull? The bull grows more dangerous, and the Holocaust as writer's subject charges up more ferociously. The beast roars on past us, if it does not trample us entirely. Is it ungrateful of me to ask if one can imagine a real-life Holocaust-survivor—even, or especially, of a poetic nature—being healed of his trauma by reading, say, the Holocaust-survivor poet, Paul Celan? It was Celan who wrote, in "Death Fugue": "Black milk of dawn we drink it at dusk! we drink it at noon and at daybreak we drink it at night / we drink it and drink it / we are digging a grave in the air there's room for us all. . . ."

Celan was so little healed by his own poetry that at the height of his powers he took his life. What is the pleasure for us in reading Celan? Maybe only Kafka's answer: "A book should be an axe to break up the frozen seas within."

Why should we want these numb seas broken up? To be alive, since life means feeling pain. How much pain? Where do our natures draw the line between pain that gives life and pain that kills spirit?

"Anyone who has been tortured remains tortured," said the survivor-poet-chemist Primo Levi who, in *If This Be a Man*, tried with elegant and precise prose to illuminate the black night of Auschwitz and then in black despair ended his life a suicide.

But this small, brilliant book is intent on healing. And so—would that it were so—let it be.

NORMA ROSEN

Using a Knife Instead of a Fine Pencil

AMERICAN SPHINX: THE CHARACTER OF THOMAS JEFFERSON. By Joseph J. Ellis. Alfred A. Knopf. $26.00

"In the beginning was the word," as Ralph Ellison said, "and the contradiction of the word." This paradox was the personal fate of the aristocratic democrat, Thomas Jefferson. Recently, however, revisionist historians have nailed him to it in order to dissect him. At the Jeffersonian Legacies Conference in 1993 Paul Finkelman reduced Jefferson to a "self-indulgent negrophobic Virginia planter"; and Conor Cruise O'Brien was recently

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hailed on the cover of the *Atlantic Monthly* for knocking Jefferson "off his pedestal" and out of the American canon altogether. Identifying himself with Edmund Burke, he revived Burke's quarrel with Jefferson over the French Revolution and added the hyperbolic charge that Jefferson's defense of it provided "a charter for the most militant segment of the American militias," who bombed the federal office building in Oklahoma City. None of this revisionism has anything to do with new documentary discoveries about Jefferson; it has everything to do with the current climate of opinion, which mixes a legitimate historical concern about the history of slavery with a vulgar prosecutorial bent for finding clay feet in public figures.

Henry Adams spoke of needing "a fine pencil," responsive to lights and shadows, to portray a man whose contradictions make his character so interesting. Joseph J. Ellis's *American Sphinx: the Character of Thomas Jefferson* holds the promise in its title of taking up Adams's challenge. As historian, Ellis often does write with more balance than the radical or conservative caricaturists; but since his book is on character, he must also be a psychologist, even though a "common sense" one and not a psychoanalytic one, as he tells us. Yet in effect he is as pejorative and censorious in his view of Jefferson's personality as bad Freudian biographers are of their subjects. Even when he seems to come down on Jefferson's side, he does so in a left-handed way.

Under "Jefferson" in his index, the first of only two headings having to do with his character is "adolescent romanticism of." With conservative bias Ellis keeps harping on it throughout his book as the key to Jefferson's personality. Ellis is also reanimating an old quarrel, the political disagreements between John Adams and Jefferson, and agreeing with the more conservative Adams that Jefferson's "entire political vision rested on a seductive set of attractive illusions." To fit this premise Ellis creates an ideologized psychology for Jefferson: "Jefferson was, then, a quintessential Whig, but the Whig values were so appealing because they blended so nicely with his own quintessentially Jeffersonian character." They blend because the argument is circular. Ellis finds Jefferson's romantic "cast of mind" in his *A Summary View of the Rights of British America,* in which he anticipates his indictment against the king in the Declaration of Independence and elaborates the idea of a Saxon past of pre-Norman England, "which has also become known as the Whig interpretation of history." This was a widely shared American view, not peculiar to Jefferson, but Ellis sees it as expressing "the visionary prospects he already carried around in his mind and heart." How do we know these "utopian expectations" have "deep roots in his personality"? Because Ellis says so, asserting that the "sentimental and almost juvenile character" of Jefferson's illusions was "a central feature of Jefferson's mature thought and character," their roots lying "buried in the inner folds of Jefferson's personality, beyond the reach of traditional historical methods and

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canons of evidence." Jefferson's ideology substitutes for Jefferson's character; condemning the former, Ellis can demean the latter.

He rejects the circular reasoning of psychoanalytic explanations, which refer to some childhood experience as explanatory, though it cannot be retrieved "except by reference to the particular theory posited at the start." But his own view is circular, finding a key in Jefferson's youthful project for building Monticello as a reclusive safe haven, which Ellis characterizes as suggesting "a level of indulged sentimentality that one normally associates with an adolescent." Ironically, it is the psychoanalyst Erik H. Erikson who finds Jefferson, whatever trend of nostalgia he may have had, to be a man "of rare adult stature," while it is the historian who is in the grip of a circular and reductive explanation of Jefferson's character.

Ellis's only other index heading for Jefferson's character is "conflict avoidance by." True, Jefferson was notably thin-skinned for a politician, did not like public speaking, and much preferred writing. At the same time, however, he plunged over and over again into the most contentious issues of American politics with definite opinions for which he took responsibility in trying to implement or revise them in light of the hard realities he encountered. His major libertarian achievements have to do with his defenses of free speech and religious freedom, which are based on affirming the important value of controversy.

Jefferson's rhetoric, Ellis complains, lends itself to "functional promiscuity" so that "where the real Jeffersonian idea ends and the platitudinous cant begins has become an unanswerable question." But if this "clear voice of America's revolutionary ideology, its purest conscience, its most brilliant expositor, its true poet," as the historian Bernard Bailyn has eloquently said, left a conflicted and confusing legacy, it was not because of the "duplicity of the pure in heart" or of some "mysterious mechanisms" in his head, as Ellis believes, but rather because he was also the practical politician, with gifts for administration, who more than any of his peers confronted the limitations and difficulties of his vision, "the ambiguities of freedom." That is the truth you cannot learn from the revisionists.

Ellis is a good enough historian to make it clear that Jefferson's cabinet was "one of the ablest and most stable" in our history and his first term as president one of "the most uniformly successful in American presidential history in achieving its stated objectives." Ellis is also fairer than the other revisionists in acknowledging that Jefferson was a vanguard antislavery reformer until after 1784 and that his prejudicial remarks in *Notes on Virginia* on the natural inferiority of blacks were "advanced as a suspicion only," though Ellis omits letters where Jefferson repudiates them. Like O'Brien, Ellis makes much of Jefferson's deportation scheme for freed blacks, but it was also endorsed by Lincoln until 1863, and it was Lincoln

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who in the great debates drew his inspiration for containing slavery from the early Jefferson of 1776-1784 and turned his "self-evident" truths into a "standard maxim for free society" to be "constantly approximated in the future."

Ellis is refreshing in his skepticism about the Hemings-Jefferson liaison, which Sean Wilentz in the *New Republic* believes "should fill us with cheer" as an example of interracial intimacy and respect in an "underground" family. (So we have the savor of scandal combined with the uplift of family values.) Ellis thinks that the affair contradicts the dominant patterns of Jefferson's character, but Ellis's reason is pejorative: Jefferson "lacked the capacity" for such a "direct, physical expression of his sexual energies." Even if untrue, the story "captures the inherently promiscuous character of Jefferson's elusive personality." So Jefferson is guilty, even when he is innocent. Was he wrong to believe that his enemies had "never known *him,*" only "an imaginary being clothed with odious attributes to whom they had given his name"?

CUSHING STROUT

The Public Trust

IN DEFENSE OF GOVERNMENT. THE FALL AND RISE OF PUBLIC TRUST. By Jacob Weisberg. Scribner's. $22.00

Public trust is falling, not rising, so the hoped-for renaissance in government activism and in the American public's trust in the government does not seem to be around the corner. Why is that? This is a question Weisberg never quite gets around to answering. He approaches an answer in his discussion of those he calls "reactionary liberals"—his paradigmatic case in point is the former governer of New York, Mario Cuomo, who believes that "the horizon of government is still limitless," and who briefly considers the notion that liberals need to rethink, then dismisses it. He acknowledges that the welfare system is "deeply flawed" and that a "monthly AFDC check traps an underclass in poverty" but reactionary liberals, Weisberg continues,

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have nothing to offer by way of response to such facts other than spouting platitudes. "Reactionary liberalism," he continues, "corresponds to pseudo-libertarianism on the right because it ignores government's failures, just as most Republicans close their eyes to its successes." So we have a check-mate with the worst excesses of each trend—liberal and conservative—bouncing off one another. In the meantime, the real work of government isn't getting done.

There is considerable truth to Weisberg's approach. But the program he spills the most ink defending, Gatreaux, which was designed originally to move a small number of black Chicagoans on welfare into white suburbs, has drawn mixed reviews—from whites and blacks alike. No doubt it has helped a few, and this should by no means be discounted, but there are real questions of sustainability over time—placement runs $1500 to $2000 per year and a "Section 8 certificate" for housing costs around $6000 a year. Its lack of universality is another issue. The social programs that fare best are those that apply to everyone, like Social Security. They need not apply in the same way to everyone: benefits may vary; need-based criteria can be put into place. But political legitimation for such programs is high. Not so the program Weisberg defends, especially not in the way he defends it. "Gatreaux works best in secret. If white bungalow dwellers don't know that the black family moving onto their block is being put there by a federal program, they are less likely to object." This is a rather odd thing for a democratic theorist to extol. Surely there must be a better way to get at the problem of housing segregation!

Along the way, Weisberg makes some strange comparisons and forges peculiar links. The Gatreaux program—which we don't know much about because things are best kept more or less secret—gets listed along with preserving the wilderness, Social Security, and the "defeat of Hitler" as a resounding government success. What's wrong with this picture? One program applies to a small number of people and lacks widespread political legitimacy; a second applies to everyone; the third isn't a policy at all but a sustained effort to defeat a military threat. This isn't a terribly persuasive way to make one's case. For one thing, foreign policy is intrinsically different from domestic policy and success. For another, one program—Gatreaux—is a source of disenchantment, in part because it doesn't really do what it promised to do on a major scale; the other program—social security—is now part of the American landscape and routinely accepted as part of government's task.

The book is also marred by Weisberg's insistent caricature of the positions he opposes—whether those of "reactionary liberals" or "libertarian conservatives." To be sure, such positions are easy enough to mock but a clearer sense of grappling with the reasons why such positions continue to hold sway or are on the rise (in the case of libertarianism) would have given

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this book greater persuasive power by far. One salient point Weisberg does make—and he should have made more of it—is the insistent manner in which celebrants of big government from the 1960s on cast their goals in nigh utopian language. We weren't just going to do something to ameliorate poverty. We declared a "War on Poverty." But in wars, the object is victory, even unconditional surrender of the enemy. Nothing of the sort is ever possible in the world of domestic policy and problems. By setting one's sights too high, one invites subsequent disillusionment, even cynicism.

Weisberg calls this the "Expectations Gap" and says it has been a major source of public disenchantment with government. He lists four "ongoing crises" as the "prime movers in discrediting government in the American mind," namely, Vietnam; the welfare explosion and decline of cities; economic slowdown; and decline of routine public services.

Is this credible? Even at the height of the Vietnam War trust in government was much higher than it is now—at present only about twenty-five percent of the American public has any trust in government; back in 1973 over seventy percent did—and many of those expressing mistrust in government are young people who weren't even born during that tragic debacle. Welfare explosion and decline of the cities, yes, but the economy waxes and wanes even when it is hot, at least for the many winners, and it does little to influence evaluations of public confidence. Decline of services? Maybe, depending on where you live. But Weisberg strangely omits a major source of discontent, namely, government's entry into volatile moral and cultural matters, like abortion, where the full force of the federal government was placed on one side of a morally fraught and deeply contentious question. Government as arbiter of moral, even metaphysical, matters fueled what has come to be known as the "culture wars" and these are a major source of the present cynicism and overall grumpiness.

Finally, Weisberg launches, at various points, into a vituperative attack on communitarians. They are either naïve and nostalgic—deriving "their political ideas from a gauzy vision of old-time, small-town America"—or they are pernicious—unwittingly recapitulating "the views of fascist theorists such as Carl Schmitt and Giovanni Gentile." Now I doubt whether Weisberg has read either Schmitt or Gentile but I know he cannot have read Alasdair MacIntyre and Roberto Unger and make this scandalous claim. Unger's problem is that he is wildly overinflated in his theory and weak in his arguments, but he is scarcely a proto-fascist, even unwittingly. And this charge against philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre, repeated from Stephen Holmes's intemperate attack in his book, *The Anatomy of Antiliberalism*, is false and ugly. MacIntyre has a bleak view of late modernity, to be sure, but his advice—to the extent he offers any—is for folks to live in decent communities where virtue is honored and even possible.

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MacIntyre has no trust whatever in collective solutions or a powerful, irresistible state. Most communitarians I know would scoff at "Leave it to Beaver"; do not yearn for a "smaller world"; and do not talk about collective anything. They do talk about the need for responsibilities as well as rights but any sensible person can endorse this proposition. Being a sensible person, Weisberg himself does. So why this panting and heaving against communitarians? These excesses raise one's hackles unnecessarily and to no good purpose, for Weisberg, in the end, is surely right: liberals must learn to accept limits to what government can accomplish and conservatives need to honor and support what government alone can do.

JEAN BETHKE ELSHTAIN

Coming Clean About the Late Sixties

RADICAL SON: A GENERATIONAL ODYSSEY. By David Horowitz.
Free Press. $27.50

How David Horowitz, one of the New Left's movers-and-shakers, ended up as a Reagan Republican makes for a fascinating read, one with resonances that go well beyond the usual reassessments of those times, those places, that have turned ongoing debates about what the late sixties was and meant into a cottage industry. What Horowitz provides is a memoir that cobbles confession about his radical past with a stirring [read: polemical] defense of his current life as a born-again Right-winger. Of the two scenarios, the first is the more persuasive because, if Horowitz scours his former comrades-in-radical arms, he is even tougher on himself.

Reading these sections one wonders how he could have been, at one and the same time, so insufferably arrogant and so shockingly naïve? Horowitz's answer? *Cherchez le père*, for as a scarlet diaper baby, what the young Horowitz wanted above all else was to avoid the disappointment and bitterness his father felt when the Party abandoned him after decades of loyal, unquestioning service. Totalitarianism of every shade is notable for such merciless disregard of the individual, so it is hardly surprising that he would later come to embrace the giddy promises of participatory democracy. The rub, as Horowitz would have it, was that the major architects of the New Left (including himself) were more interested in exploitation and eventual

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control than they were in redressing specific instances of social injustice. Horowitz, in short, became a mirror image of the very father he had so confidently rebelled against: "As a result, I was constantly blindsided by events, until pain and disappointment eventually confronted me with our common fate. There is no inevitable reward for our virtues, and no authority to whom we can safely appeal."

Horowitz faced his *Kronstadt* at a time when many of his cronies would have been hard pressed to identify the allusion. For them, history, even socialist history, was so much bunk. Michael Lerner, currently hewing a politics of caring and religious renewal in the pages of his magazine, *Tikkun*, took a very different position during the late sixties. As he (presumably) told Horowitz back in the heyday of sex, drugs, and rock and roll, "You have to take LSD. Until you've dropped acid, you don't know what socialism is." Small wonder that Irving Howe got so infuriated by the know-nothings on the New Left. At the same time, however, they were in tune with the *Zeitgeist* in ways that he wasn't; and their relentless assault on everything that smacked of authority—variously identified as "the System," "the Establishment," or "Amerika"—struck especially responsive chords on college campuses.

The romantic embrace of the Black Panthers was a case in point. *Ramparts*, the flagship magazine of those contentious times, pleaded the Panthers' case and brought them wide visibility if not universal acceptance. To their credit, many recognized early that Bobby Seale and company were longer on militant posturing than on practical politics. What even these people didn't quite realize, however, is how deadly their hustle could, in fact, be. Horowitz, an editor at *Ramparts*, finally did—that is, when Betty Van Patten, the Panthers' bookkeeper, turned up dead. From that point onward, Horowitz went into a disillusioned funk. How could he turn against those who had shaped his very sense of the world? And how could he expose the darker side of what passed for youthful idealism? The personal stakes were high, because if he "came clean" about his doubts, he would surely earn widespread dismissal and angry contempt for his trouble:

> I thought about the way I had become a stranger to them politically, joining the other side in a cold war against a faith they had embraced as humanity's best hope. I was like Whittaker Chambers in their generation—a young man inspired by the high-minded passions of the Left who had broken though to the dark underside of the radical cause. Like Chambers, I had encounters with totalitarian forces that involved betrayal and death, and even a Soviet spy. Like him, I had been demonized for my second thoughts by a culture sympathetic to the Left and hostile to its adversaries. I, too, had to face the savage personal attacks by my former comrades that were designed to warn others to remain in the fold.

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Even if one discounts Horowitz's strained, often unconvincing effort to link his situation to that of Whittaker Chambers, the fact remains that he writes as one who has lived in the belly of the beast and pays dearly for each of his "second thoughts." Take, for example, his growing feeling that what ideologues of the New Left decidedly lacked was a capacity for self-criticism and, moreover, that anyone who prodded them in this direction would be summarily silenced. "Even to raise such questions," Michael Lerner declared at a Berkeley seminar of, by, and for the new radical wave, "is counter-revolutionary."

Meanwhile, the atrocities continued: the virtual expulsion of Jews who had been such a prominent part of the civil rights movement; the wide, unthinking acceptance of the equation that linked Zionism with racism; the dozens of instances, large and small, in which the socialist dream turned into totalitarian nightmare; and, of course, the murder of his friend, Betty Van Patten. As Horowitz puts it: "Thinking this way blinded us to signs that might have saved us. We thought of ourselves as self-effacing, but in fact we were arrogant. We regarded ourselves as better than others from our privileged caste who were unwilling to perform the deeds we did. That was why we didn't listen and couldn't see. Like all radicals, we were intoxicated by our own virtue."

Eventually, Horowitz came to work the other side of the political street, bringing the same passion (and, some would say, the same certainty) that had marked him as a propagandist promoting radical causes. Indeed, many wondered if Horowitz had simply slipped to the other side of the coin, and if what he discovered about the Left would come back to bite him from the Right. Not so, Horowitz insists, for:

> what often impressed me was the tolerance of the conservatives I knew for human faults and failings, including my own. Some conservatives were like the flinty puritans of liberal caricature, but most of my new acquaintances and political associates were not. Over time, their tolerance became intelligible to me. What made one a conservative was recognition of the human capacity for evil, or for just plain screwing up. That is why the rules were important. Not because conservatives expected nobody to break them. But because having rules that were respected made it harder for people to do so. This was a more subtle—but in the long run more trustworthy—form of compassion than liberals' softness of heart.

Given Horowitz's history, more second thoughts (and abrupt transformations) are certainly possible, although his portrait of a sadder, but wiser political animal makes this unlikely.

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Because the raw facts of his personal odyssey are so compelling we risk overlooking a more obvious truth—namely that Horowitz is a superb writer. James Atlas was not wrong when he characterized *Radical Son* as a "work of literature" for that is precisely what one feels in the shape and ring of its paragraphs. Put a slightly different way, Horowitz's painful narrative is more honest—and to my mind, more important—than other memoirs of those times, those places. He not only sees with unblinkered eyes but also writes with an ear finely tuned to human frailties that dare not speak their name. Ultimately, *Radical Son* is about uneasy reconciliations—with a radical father as well as with oneself. We expect our best novelists to do such work. In this case, however, it comes wrapped in the folds of an extraordinary memoir. About this, even those who do not share Horowitz's current politics will find themselves nodding in agreement.

SANFORD PINSKER

How To Begin?

Majestic Indolence: English Romantic Poetry And The Work of Art. By Willard Spiegelman. Oxford University Press. $55.00
The Title to The Poem. By Anne Ferry. Stanford University Press. $39.50

I am writing this in bed, and the books under review I have read here too. I'm sitting, propped on pillows, under a black down duvet, with heavy brocaded curtains pulled over the daylight, wallpaper (a dark cocoa whose froth is a pattern of faint tarnished-gold stars) that covers the ceiling too, a CD purring from hidden speakers, and a single dusty shaft of intense light on a text: the bedroom is my lair, the memory of my father's lap, my sheltered cave of making. I read and write here because of the singular privacy, the vaguely erotic stillness, the languid trace of dreamwork a bedroom allows. It's here I can both withdraw and engage. I wonder if Elizabeth Bishop didn't have her bedroom in mind when she wrote of her peculiar aesthetic ideal: "What one seems to want in art, in experiencing it, is the same thing that is necessary for its creation, a self-forgetful, perfectly useless concentration." Of course, to write about this idleness, to pursue this languor, requires a great deal of spirited concentration, an informed subtlety quick to

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make surprising connections—in short, just the sort of scholarship Willard Spiegelman summons in his splendid new book about indolence as concept, condition, and trope among the Romantic poets.

Spiegelman is a canny reader, unpersuaded by fashionable critical ideologies, yet aware of the social and cultural circumstances in which poems have been written and read. And still he champions the aesthetic. The work of art, he maintains, is the play of the mind, and "indolence," however it may figure as a condition for inspiration, is finally the *freedom* of the poem itself—its freedom both to engage tradition and thwart purposeful interpretations.

Spiegelman backs into the subject, deftly sketching a taxonomy of the term "indolence." As acedia, what had been a monastic vice was by the eighteenth century transformed into a lyric emotion. In a culture that invented leisure—from the spa to the shopping arcade, from horse racing to circulating libraries—the growth of the middle class provided new venues for enjoyment and self-improvement. But by the heyday of the Romantic poets, idleness had been more chastely linked with a line of pastoral and elegiac poetry that stood apart from the civic life and had become a crucial trope of the picturesque reverie, of the isolate self. Remarking that "self-encaged is self-engaged," Spiegelman stresses the paradoxical nature of the era's wise passiveness and dejection odes. The poet's withdrawal was his imaginative leap forward. On the one hand, this freedom is manifested in an aesthetic sense of disinterestedness, of that sort of beauty Kant defined as "purposiveness without the idea of purpose." On the other hand, the poet's freedom signified the Higher Uselessness, a mind liberated from commercial affairs, intent only on the tasks of the imagination. If leisure is a way of *killing time*, so too is poetry.

There follow chapters that probe Wordsworth's dell, Coleridge's bower, Keats's guerdon, and Shelley's bark—the emblems of each poet's imaginative retreat, realm of dream, negation, fantasy, and loss. To stay to one side of life, behind or beyond it, was as much a part of the psychology of Wordsworth's rustics as of Shelley's aristocratic utopias of eros. Wordsworth is the most ambivalent case, and Spiegelman astutely plays the poet's sauntering muse against his puritan work-ethic. But it was Wordsworth who first found his privileged moments in the pastoral and the elegy and incorporated both into the outsized Romantic lyric that explored the doctrine of compensation: the only true paradise is a lost paradise. Coleridge, of course, who once described his own sloth as "indolence capable of energies," is the central figure here. His formulation of the creative imagination—that it "dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to recreate. . .struggles to idealize and unify"—goes to the heart of Spiegelman's portrait of the Romantic burden. Coleridge's "idling spirit" found its rhetorical counterpart in his ruminative odes, and "Frost at Midnight," "The Eolian Harp," and "Dejection: An

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Ode" are given close, exemplary, and elegant readings. Keats's valedictory tone, his high aesthetic response to experience, floating among its plangencies, has its apogee in "To Autumn." "The aesthetic state—watching and seeing—is the end of both action and inaction," writes Spiegelman. "Autumn herself embodies what we may ambiguously call the *work* of art. She is a laborer who, in the completion of her tasks, *has metamorphosed into an image of elegant stasis, leisure, and ornament*"—the moody season now almost an urn.

His survey of this symbiosis between work and play among the Romantics leads naturally to a final chapter on the true heirs of this tradition: the American poets. Along with Helen Vendler and Harold Bloom, Spiegelman is one of the few critics who can write with authority about both nineteenth-century and contemporary poetry, and in this coda he puts his ear to the native ground: "Throughout American poetry, in spite of its strongly puritanical and doggedly didactic streak, there flows another current, one that asks us to see the extraneous, the peripheral, the ornamental as the equivalents as well as the opposites of the essential, the central, the necessary." Whitman's loafing and Frost's gamesmanship are his instances. My understanding of both poets has been refreshed by Spiegelman's brilliant regard for their maneuvers, the phantom soul of the one, the shimmering bondage of the other. I should say, instead, that all of *Majestic Indolence* has changed my sense of Romantic poetry precisely because it clarifies instincts one has had about the way poems are dreamt up—instincts like stalks of grass in one's mouth as he lies back in a summer meadow, or like the thoughts one has as he closes the book and turns out the light.

The word "title" (from the Latin *titulus*, meaning label) is generally understood to refer to something above or *over* a text, like an umbrella or ceiling. In fact, by its Indo-European roots, the word is related to the ur-word for ground or floor. And in a crucial sense, of course, titles do *ground* (electrically speaking) and *underlie* poems. A title can relieve the poem of doling out narrative or descriptive information; it can highlight themes, or a layering of themes; it can establish a symbol, allude to a formal tradition, guide the reader toward obvious or occult matters. It is the poem's first attempt to read itself.

To date, only John Hollander's exhilarating essay "Haddock's Eyes: A Note on the Theory of Titles," included in his *Vision and Resonance* (1975), has brought speculative attention to titles. But there hasn't been an adequate history of the business of poetic titling until this new book by Anne Ferry, and it is a stimulating and welcome study. Not until printing advances in the late seventeenth century did titling become standard, but the fact goes back to ancient times, when readers (copyists, translators, scholars, monks, etc.), not writers, entitled manuscripts. All along, a title has presupposed a reader, and

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pointed to the poem as a voice, a presentation or performance-piece. When Eliot entitles one poem "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" and another "Song for Simeon," the difference in the prepositions says a great deal about the relationship between poet and persona. Ferry parses this and many other concerns with an imaginative thoroughness. What are the different expectations generated in a reader by different titles—say, "To M—," "To Mary," and "To My Wife"? Generic titles, grammatical and rhetorical appeals, participial idioms, nouns and names, quotations and questions, even evasions. . . .Ferry considers the overtones and implications of every conceivable use for the title space, with examples drawn from an extraordinary range of poets, Herrick to Heaney. There are titans of the trade, of course, whose tails nearly wag the dog—Jonson, Wordsworth, Browning, Hardy, Frost, Stevens, Auden, Ashbery—and they are paid special attention. What makes both her classifications and her examples so lively is her sense that "titles always look back to their past—imitating, modifying, questioning, rebelling against it—at the same time that they vividly reflect and energetically respond to the cultural situations that constitute their present." This is an indispensable hornbook. Anne Ferry has written the last word on the first words of any poem.

J. D. McCLATCHY

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LETTERS

To the Editor:

In *Partisan Review* 4/97 Edith Kurzweil contends that Bruno Bettelheim's career was built on a fictional past. She bases this on Richard Pollak's biography of Bettelheim. The fiction of which he is accused is that of claiming psychological psychoanalytic credentials and, thereby, getting his early appointments. The fact is that for his major appointments as Professor at the University of Chicago and Principal of the Orthogenic School he needed neither psychological nor psychoanalytic credentials. His first and primary appointment was in the Department of Education for which a doctorate in philosophy was quite adequate; at the time, there were no particular credentials necessary to direct a school for emotionally disturbed children; and neither the Orthogenic School nor the department of education was psychoanalytically oriented. Furthermore in 1952 (when I arrived in Chicago), everyone who knew Bettelheim, including Orthogenic School staff and Department of Education faculty, knew that his doctorate was in art history.

Kurzweil reports that Pollak's biography is based on meticulous research and is even-handed. He certainly did a lot of research. However, in those areas with which I am personally familiar (both through direct observation over many years and through familiarity with all professional records), much of it was presented in a very distorted and clearly biased fashion. It is unfortunate that a reviewer perpetuates these gross misrepresentations, among which the above is one of the more flagrant.

Jacquelyn Sanders, Ph.D.
University of Chicago

To the Editor:

As the author of a major textbook in the field of autism, I am writing to tell you that the book review by Edith Kurzweil entitled "The Inimitable Bruno Bettelheim" sullies the intellectual reputation of your magazine. It is a strikingly illiterate defense of Bettelheim and his work.

There is consensus in the field today that Bettelheim did not even know how to diagnose autism, much less treat it. He certainly did not "help a number of autistic children live full lives" as the book review states at its end. What he did do is abuse parents, particularly mothers, of these neurologically impaired children. I know of no other professional in my lifetime who so violated the rule of medicine "do no harm."

Personally, I also found the book review offensive in its defense of Bettelheim's lifetime of lying and cheating as a normal behavior of immigrants to the United States. This impinges the achievements of the overwhelming number of honest immigrants who found success here.

Mary Coleman, MD
Lake Forest, Illinois

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Edith Kurzweil replies:

Dr. Mary Coleman accuses me of a "strikingly illiterate defense" of Bruno Bettelheim's "lifetime of lying and cheating," while Dr. Jacquelyn Sanders claims I am unfairly accepting his biographer's, Richard Pollak's, biases and "gross misrepresentations" against him. And whereas Dr. Coleman accuses Dr. Bettelheim of having violated medical ethics, Dr. Sanders informs us (correctly, I believe) that in the 1940s psychological/psychoanalytic credentials were not required of the Director of the Orthogenic School. Clearly, his posthumous reputation keeps mattering in Chicago.

But neither Dr. Coleman nor Dr. Sanders caught the thrust of my review, which was to explain Bettelheim's predicament as a Jewish emigré, in a society which did not exactly welcome foreigners, much less competition. I did not defend "Bettelheim's lifetime of lying and cheating as normal behavior of immigrants," but described, in some detail, how getting a foothold occasionally called for one or another white lie. I should add that I received other, more personal communications, which said that this context was illuminating.

In any event neither of these two contradictory letters recognizes that I tried to write an even-handed review, pointing to both Bettelheim's failures and accomplishments.

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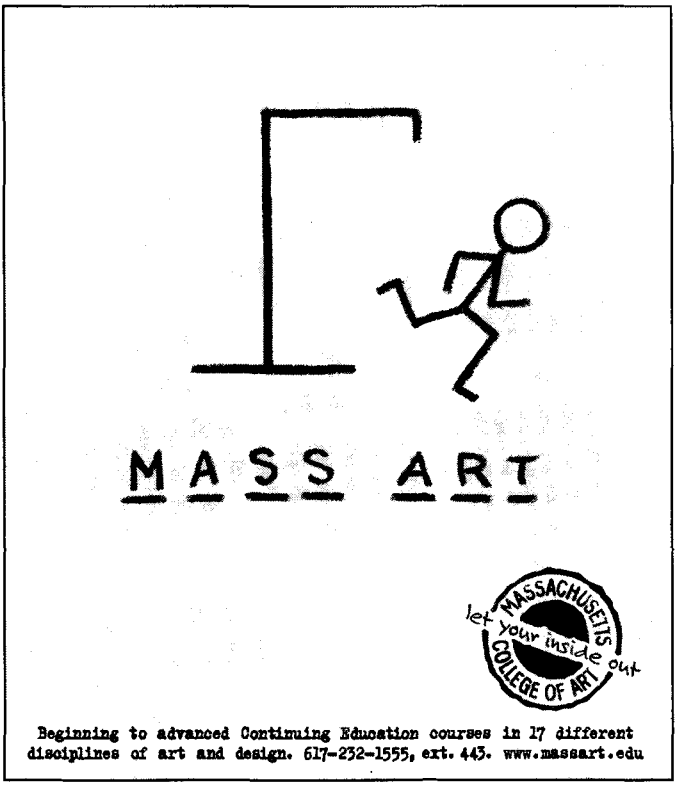
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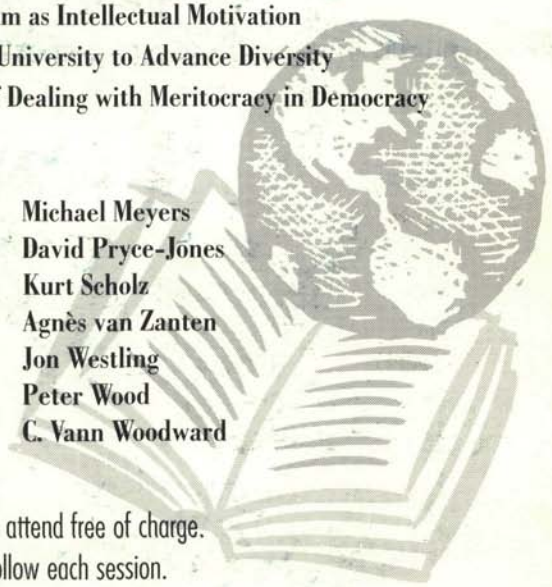
Friday, May 8, and Saturday, May 9, 1998
George Sherman Union, Boston University, 775 Commonwealth Avenue

Join us in addressing

The Impact of High School Preparation on College Education
The Core Curriculum as Intellectual Motivation
Administering the University to Advance Diversity
Comparing Ways of Dealing with Meritocracy in Democracy



Participants include

Bernard Avishai
Robert Brustein
Chester Finn
Nathan Glazer
Rita Kramer
Edith Kurzweil
Jerry Martin
Michael Meyers
David Pryce-Jones
Kurt Scholz
Agnès van Zanten
Jon Westling
Peter Wood
C. Vann Woodward

The public is invited to attend free of charge.
Open discussion will follow each session.

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